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MAY 2006

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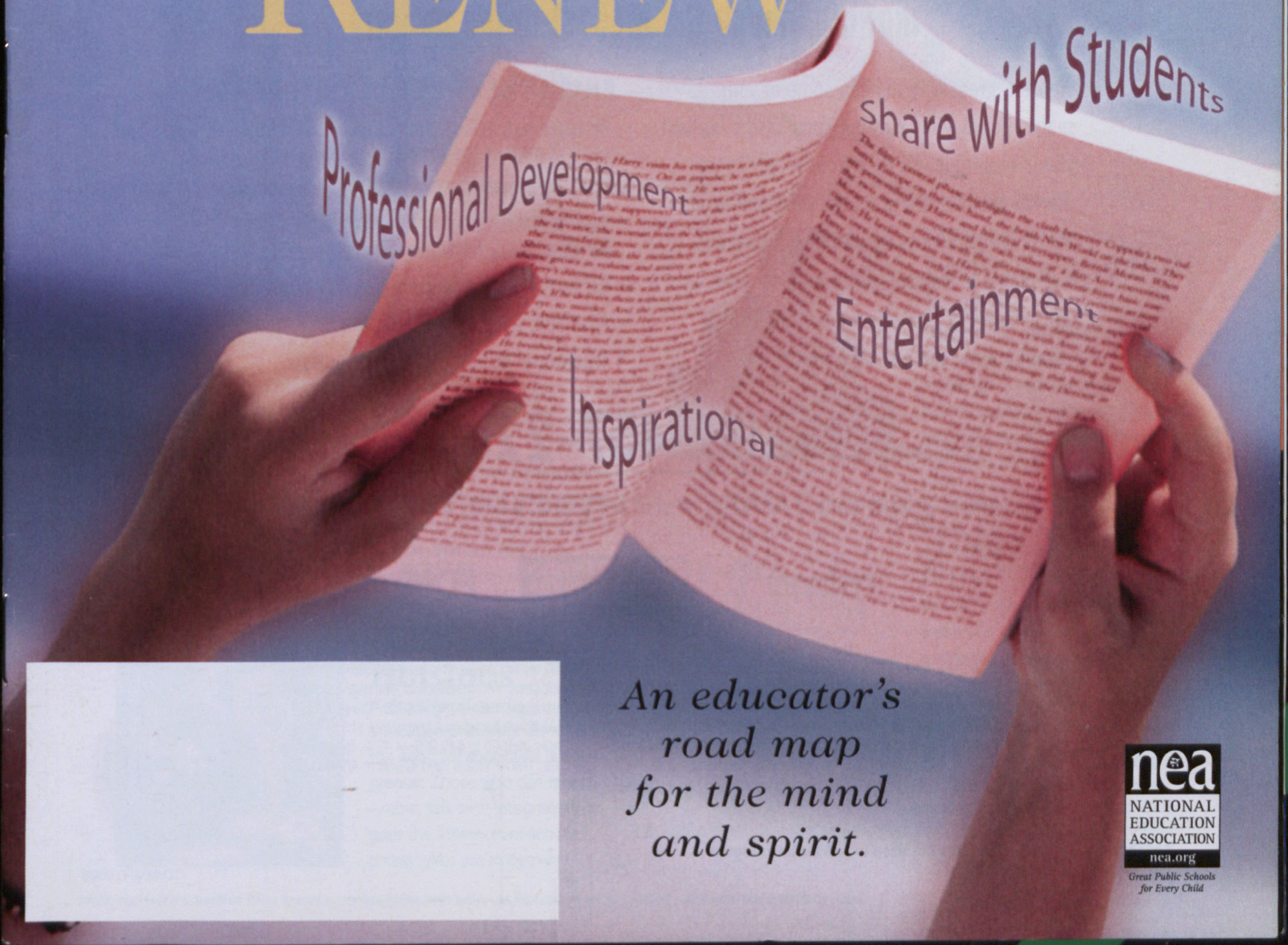
READ & RENEW



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MAY

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features

COVER 24

READ & RENEW

There are few better ways to relax and regroup than sinking into a comfy chair with a good book. NEA educators recommend their favorite reads for rejuvenating the spirit, refreshing skills, freeing the imagination, and sharing with kids.

GIRL BULLIES

Sugar and Spice? 30

When mean girls wage psychological warfare, educators are in an ideal position to help end the tension. The first step? Learning to understand the signs of social aggression.

CAREER TRENDS

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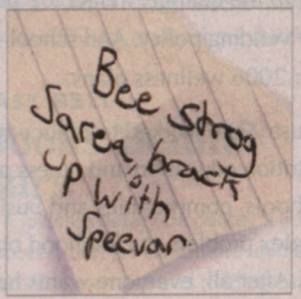
From Legos to Logos 36

Getting kids' attention has always been a task, but as students grow more consumed with popular brands at earlier ages, learning might be moving even further from their minds.



CONFISCATED ITEMS

'That's Mine Now!' 38

Notes, underwear, a live rooster, and a dead owl—the drawer where teachers stash the items students smuggle into school is getting crowded. And weird.

PHOTO TOP: SANDY SCHAEFFER; SMALL IMAGES CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER RIGHT: LISA HENDERLING, GROFF CREATIVE, PHELAN EBENHACK, DAVID DE LOSSY

Parents and kids are seeing a different type of change from school vending machines.

Healthy and active kids can certainly enjoy soft drinks as part of a balanced lifestyle. While parents can help kids make good nutrition and regular exercise priorities at home, they can't always control the decisions they make at school. So they've looked to us for help. And we're responding.

Our industry has introduced a new school vending policy that will make a variety of beverage choices available to kids of different ages. The right beverages for the right age at the right time. It's the right thing to do.

Parents are clearly happy with the change. In fact, 82 percent* of parents nationwide support our new vending policy. And school systems are already including our policy in their 2006 wellness plans.

For years, the beverage industry has worked to reduce obesity and promote overall wellness through nutrition education and fitness programs. We know it will take kids, parents, schools, communities and business all working together to address the complex problem of childhood obesity. Our industry is stepping up to do its part. After all, everyone wants happy, healthy kids.

Our new school vending policy:

The right beverages for the right age at the right time.

Elementary School
- Only bottled water and 100 percent juice.

Middle School
- Only nutritious and/or lower-calorie beverages during school hours.

High School
- Variety of beverage choices.
- No more than 50 percent soft drinks.

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*August 17-20, 2005 national survey of 800 adults conducted by Public Opinion Strategies (margin of error is ± 3.46%)

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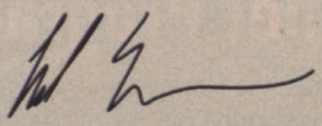
EDITOR'S NOTE

Inspired Readings

James and the Giant Peach. Where the Sidewalk Ends. The Little House. As I watch my kids start to tackle books on their own, I vividly remember these gems from the beginning of my life as a reader. ¶ My wife, who's a high school English teacher, rattles off titles she's seen captivate her students over the years—*The Great Gatsby, The Diary of Anne Frank, The Outsiders*. It was reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* in high school, in fact, that made her want to be a teacher. ¶ To help you recapture that same spark, we asked your colleagues to recommend books to help hone your craft, to inspire, and to share; you'll see their picks on page 24, and more at www.neatoday.org. It's a way to end the school year on a note that, we hope, will stoke your own imaginations this summer—and throughout the year to come. ¶ Thanks to all of you who've taken the time to inspire us with stories of your own during this school year. In all of your shared experiences, it's your dedication, your hard work, and your optimism that shine through. Please keep them coming, and here's hoping your school year has a storybook ending—we'll be back in September. ¶ In the meantime, check in at www.neatoday.org or e-mail us at neatoday@nea.org.



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A free, quality public education is a fundamental human right for all.

I see the face of a child. She has a beautiful, shy smile. She lives in a huge, sprawling shantytown in a developing country. She is dark-skinned. Her nationality doesn't matter. What matters is that she is a child with all of the dazzling potential of a child.

She sleeps the sleep of a child, and she dreams the dreams of a child. And yet, when she awakens, she awakens to a living nightmare of poverty, despair, and ignorance. She has never spent a single day of her life in school. Instead, every morning, she accompanies her mother to a huge garbage dump, where they pick through mountains of debris, looking for something, anything, to sell. At day's end, she and her mother trudge home, carrying over their shoulders, in burlap sacks, what they've collected. This girl is illiterate, she's malnourished, and she knows nothing about HIV/AIDS, but soon she will be a young woman.

I think about this girl when I am doing Education International (EI) work, for there are millions upon millions just like her around the world. And when I consider the work that NEA does with EI, I think it will not be in vain if just one child, like the girl I've described, gets the chance to go to school.

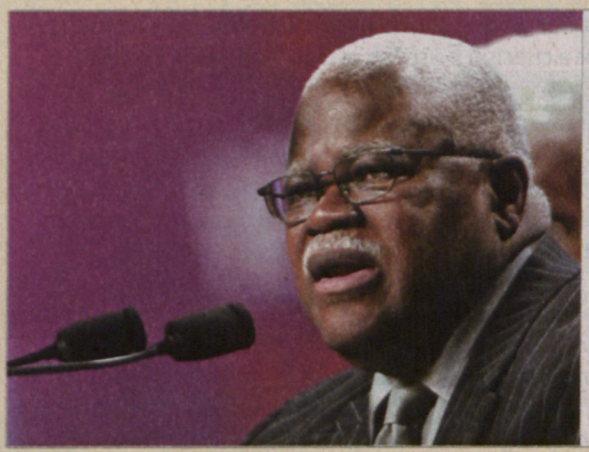
It has been said that educators care more than others think is wise; risk more than others think is safe; dream more than others think is practical; and expect more than others think is possible. And I, for one, know it's true, and it fills me with pride.

NEA's membership in Education International (www.ei-ie.org) affords us, as educators, the opportunity to link arms with other caring educators around the world—more than 29 million of them, in fact—and to raise our voices on behalf of the children of the world, and on behalf of our profession.

It is a fundamental human right for all to have a free, quality public education. Education International is dedicated to this ideal. And EI is the number one advocate in the world today for teachers and public schools. That is why EI has NEA's full support.

I was recently elected Vice President of Education International, and it was a great honor. After all, NEA is a founding member of Education International and NEA's Mary Hatwood Futrell is the founding president. Plus, the Association is the largest affiliate among EI's membership of 348 national education unions in 166 countries.

Faced with the magnitude and the multitude of challenges around the world—war, famine, disease, and oppression—there is an understandable tendency for people to feel overwhelmed and to withdraw into their private shells. But there is another option. It is for us to say to ourselves: I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And I will not refuse to do something because I cannot do everything. I will do what I can and keep on doing it. For more information about what you can do, join NEA's international listserv. Details can be found at: www.nea.org/international.



NEA's membership in Education International affords us, as educators, the opportunity to link arms with other caring educators around the world.

—REG WEAVER

Educators everywhere need to work together, because a great public school is a basic right for every child, whether that child lives in Idaho or Indonesia, Addis Ababa or Altoona.

Years ago, I saw tacked onto a teachers' bulletin board the following quote: "Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive. And then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive." I don't know who wrote it, but I do know it applies perfectly to the work we, as educators, do in our schools, communities, states, and internationally.

Team NEA, we are making a difference. Thank you for caring, and thank you for all that you do. Your generosity of spirit and your commitment to the cause of children and public education everywhere inspire me.

Reg Weaver

NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

PHOTO CREDIT CALVIN KNIGHT

NCLB NEEDS (LOTS OF) IMPROVEMENT

Regarding your April cover story, "Rating NCLB," surely one of the lowest days in my 30-plus years in education came the day some suit visited our school from the district office with plenty of charts and graphs showing us the students we were to give the lion's share of our attention to. These were not the struggling students, but those just below the bar of passing the state test. These were the students, the suit told us, who would "give us the biggest bang for the buck."

This was when the true extent of the madness generated by NCLB hit me. I was no longer in the business of teaching students to prepare them for life. My function was but to generate a number.

Now when we offer tutoring after school we are told not to include the lowest students, only those who, again, will "give us the biggest bang for the buck."

JOHN D. RUSSELL
Rancho Cucamonga, California

While many criticisms of NCLB mention its lack of focus on art, music, and physical education, seldom do I see a criticism of the lack of emphasis on social studies. If teachers, especially at the elementary level, know they will be evaluated on how well their students perform on proficiency tests, and social studies is not to be evaluated, they will spend less time teaching that subject. I don't blame them—any teacher would. But I fear that in the future, students will enter middle school with only a cursory knowledge of basic social studies. Perhaps the only way our "esteemed legislators" will change this emphasis is when we fall drastically behind the rest of the world.

BILL HARRIS
Washington Court House, Ohio

In an attempt to improve test scores, my school has done some very intense gathering of data. And, while I understand the necessity of the data, it does take the fun out of teaching and leaves precious little time for enrichment activities, field trips, spontaneous rewards, and art. (We don't have an art class.) So much for don't fix it, if it's not broken!

NATASHA BYARD
Deatsville, Alabama

There is nothing wrong with the concept of "No Child Left Behind." But after our President asked his subordinates to make it workable and practical, the problems developed. If someone likes an idea, they will find a way to make it work. If someone does not, they can be so negative that there's no way it can be made to work!

JACOB J. BARKMAN
Elkhart, Kansas

THE WAGES OF TEACHING

In her April essay, "The Wages of Teaching," Anna Quindlen suggests, "no school administrator should ever receive a percentage raise greater than the raise teachers get...." I'd like to propose an even more radical idea: That no administrator ever receive a salary greater than, or even equal to, a teacher's salary! After all, it is teachers who do the essential job of all schools: directly educating the students. The way I see it, the role of administrators is basically that of "support personnel"—people whose job it is to help teachers do their jobs. For an

CYBERCOMMENTARY

JOIN THE NCLB DEBATE ONLINE!

I HAVE COME to the conclusion that NCLB is really "No Testing Company Left Behind." I have taught middle and high school for 21 years, have a master's degree and am certified in math, social studies, and special education. In order to be "Highly Qualified," I now have to be certified in elementary education (because my special education students are being taught elementary level curriculum.) This is accomplished by taking a test. I also have to take tests in math and social studies since my bachelor's degree was in education as opposed to math or history. The total cost of this testing...over $400.

HAS ANY SENATOR taken professional development courses in lobbying, foreign policy, economics, or taxes? Have they had to take special state tests to verify they are suitable to serve the public? I am glad that the fervor is building over changing this law. It cannot have been a moment too soon.

I TEACH SPECIAL education at the high school level in Oregon. NCLB has completed one monumental task...ending individualized instruction. Wait, one other task it has done [is raising] expectations so high that no special needs child can actually achieve. Now don't get me wrong, I believe in my students and that they can achieve great things. However, when you have an IQ of 80, Algebra II is not an appropriate goal.

AS AN ESL educator, my biggest concern with NCLB is that we are selecting the students who WILL be left behind because we are expecting them to take and pass tests without the language skills to succeed. They become frustrated and feel like they are failures—which they are in this case. I often think what it would be like if I were placed in a French class and asked to take a test. Right!

WANT TO WEIGH IN?
Chat with your colleagues on NEA's discussion boards at **www.neatoday.org/talkback.html**.

analogous example, look at the world of professional sports. Coaches and managers usually are not paid as much as the players are—and the classroom is our field and court.

RICHARD SIEGELMAN
Plainview, New York

PRESCHOOL FOR ALL

Regarding April's Debate, ("Should all children attend preschool?") I believe the benefits of early childhood education have been known since the 1940s. And yet, here we are, 60-plus years later, still debating and underfunding these valuable programs. There is no debate in my book.

PAT MOTSCHALL
Yucaipa, California

Without preschool experience, many children enter kindergarten without necessary basic skills. Kindergarten teachers spend months "catching up" and trying to teach students to stand in line, cut, write their names, and other skills that could otherwise be introduced, practiced, and learned in preschool. The time spent learning these skills could be better utilized teaching the numerous, rigorous academic skills that are now required in kindergarten. These youngsters are our future, our tomorrow, and our hope—no matter what the cost, we owe it to our children to ensure a promising future.

GINA SEGURA
Anaheim, California

CAREER-CHANGERS

Your article, "Swapping the Boardroom for the Classroom" (March), fails to mention an important fact. With the current laws regarding the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), people who have been employed in the private sector and paid into Social Security are discovering, often too late, they will only get a small portion of their Social Security benefits. A person should not be punished for entering a field where they can have a positive effect on young people's lives.

DENNY MOORE
Chico, California

THANK YOU, NEA

I never realized what was meant by your words, "We are there for you!" until I got kicked back into our state retirement system by error. I was totally intimidated by the hearings I was required to go to, and felt completely alone. I called my NEA local. Thanks to our local rep who was "there for me," and still is, as we work through this mess.

SHARON LAFOND
Dover, New Hampshire

LET'S TALK

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upfront

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Saying Good-Bye

AFTER 36 YEARS at West Brookfield Elementary in Massachusetts, second-grade teacher Nancy Dyjak plans to retire in June. "It's been very fulfilling—and I think because of the involvement of the community, the caring of the teachers, it just flew by," she says.

Dyjak isn't alone in turning off her alarm clock. Forty percent of public school teachers plan to quit school within five years, according to the National Center for Education Information, and most say it's because they'll be retiring.

Look around the teachers' lounge—this is a rapidly graying profession. In 1996, about one out of four teachers were 50 or older. By 2005, 42 percent were. And it's a particularly acute problem in high schools, where fully 50 percent plan to leave by 2010.

It's a dilemma, no doubt. But policymakers often take the wrong approach to fixing it, says University of Pennsylvania's Richard Ingersoll. Instead of pumping big money and energy into recruitment, he suggests focusing on retaining young teachers, who often leave within the first five years. Administrative support and mentors are crucial to keeping them, he says.

That was never a problem for Dyjak, whose husband spent 35 years at West Brookfield, eventually as its principal—he's retiring, too. "Whoever will fill my shoes will definitely be in my caring place," she says.

After a combined 71 years in public education, **Nancy Dyjak** and her husband, **John,** will retire in June.

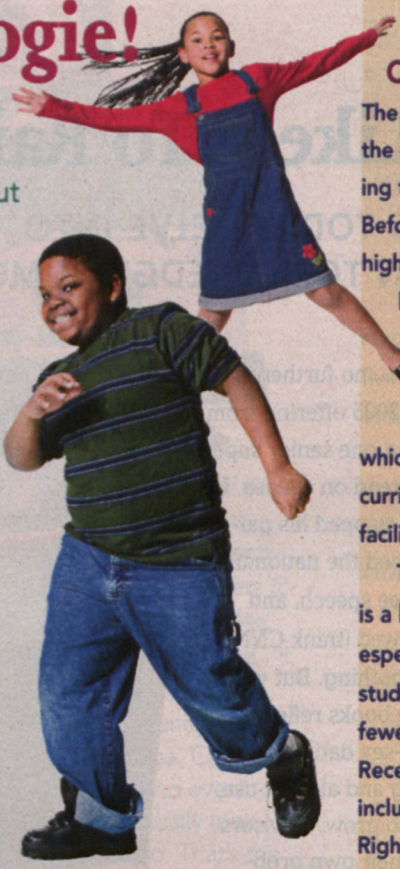
STAY-AT-HOME KIDS

MORE THAN 1 million American students stayed home from school in 2003—that is, they were home-schooled, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. That's a 29 percent increase since 1999, but still just 2.2 percent of all students. The top two reasons? Home-schooling parents believe school is dangerous, they told surveyors, or they want to provide children with a religious education.

PHOTOS CLOCK: PHOTODISC; RETIREES: DAN GOULD/WORCESTER TELEGRAM & GAZETTE; HOUSE: PHILLIP SPEARS

Get Ready To Boogie!

Good Charlotte and Ray Charles aren't the names of your new students, but their voices may soon become familiar anyway.



THESE AND OTHER techno and pop artists are helping West Virginia schoolchildren lose their extra pounds.

West Virginia's state education department decided to place a "Dance Dance Revolution Ultramix" game system in every one of its 765 public schools next year to the tune of half a million dollars. With West Virginia the third most obese state in the country—40 percent of its kids qualify as overweight—the move is designed to combat rampant obesity.

Originally from Japan, but wildly popular here, the game requires players to stand on a flat electronic pad and follow instructions on a nearby television screen—step forward, left, right! Right! Right!

—ALAN J. McCOMBS

[STATISTIC]

The percentage of **STUDENTS** who say they are afraid of **ATTACK** at school or near school.

SOURCE: THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

REACHING OUT

THROWING OUT A LINE

New Jersey reaches out to its Gulf Coast colleagues.

Gulf Coast educators hit hard by recent hurricanes have a new resource to confront powerful emotions unleashed by the storms—a hotline of trained counselors, paid for by the New Jersey Education Association, the NEA Health Information Network, and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

The hotline, first created in the wake of 9/11 for New Jersey's members, will continue to be based there but will broaden its focus to include Southerners trying to rebuild their lives and careers.

"[We're] already under the stress of living up to the standards of our accountability system and, for some, this storm is just too much," says Carol Davis, president of the Louisiana Association of Educators. "We're very grateful they seem to realize that we need more than school supplies."

—A.J.M.

Notepad

Learning Opportunities

The nation's testing policies put the cart before the horse, according to a number of researchers. Before students should submit to high-stakes standards, as required by No Child Left Behind and other state laws, the students must have the "opportunity to learn"—which includes the appropriate curriculum, learning materials, facilities, and, of course, teachers.

The question of opportunities is a hot button these days, especially for poor and minority students, who frequently have fewer than their wealthier peers. Recent legislative proposals, including the "Student Bill of Rights," (H.R. 2178) introduced last year by Congressman and Pennsylvania Democrat Chaka Fattah, aim to ensure that state and federal governments provide all students with the educational opportunities that enable them to compete and succeed in a global economy.

For more information about the "opportunity to learn" concept, and its role within standards-based education reform, as well as links to research, visit the North Carolina Regional Educational Laboratory at www.ncrel.org and search for "opportunity to learn."

Have a great idea?

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PHOTOS OF CHILDREN: PHOTODISC, ILLUSTRATION: PHOTODISC

Most Likely To Raise Eyebrows

YEARBOOKS TODAY DELVE INTO HOT-BUTTON TOPICS, EDGY HUMOR.

ONE NEEDS no further proof that yearbooks have changed than the 2005 offering from Boynton Beach High School in Florida. In one senior superlative picture, a White student held her Black boyfriend on a leash. In another, a teen faux-slapped his gal-pal. Students dismissed the national debate on racism, free speech, and good taste that followed (think CNN) as much ado about nothing. But with students demanding books reflecting such issues as same-sex dating, teen pregnancy, and drug and alcohol use, the clamor is likely to grow. Advisors who've weathered their own problems and folks at the Student Press Law Center caution educators to adopt a written editorial policy for student submissions and photos—and to be the last set of eyes on proofs.

THEN AND NOW

REMEMBER your first year as an educator? A lot more than the hairstyles and hemlines have changed. We want you to tell us about the most interesting differences—the hot education issues, the lingo, as well as your hopes and fears—between when you started teaching (be it two decades or two years ago) and today. Send a thought or two—and a photo of yourself from your earliest days if you've got one!—to us at ckopkowski@nea.org.

[STATISTIC]

The percentage of **PUBLIC EMPLOYEES** who belong to a **UNION.**

37

SOURCE: THE U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

PHOTOS WOMAN AT TOP: GROFF CREATIVE; WOMAN AT BOTTOM: OLIVIER HENRY

BOMB SQUAD?

A PERILOUS JOURNEY

School Bus Watch

THAT KID WITH THE CANDY BAR is no longer the only troublemaker whom school bus drivers must watch for. Thousands of school bus drivers have been tapped this year by a new Department of Homeland Security program training them as field scouts in the war on terror.

Called "School Bus Watch," the program aims to work with 600,000 drivers, who will monitor their routes for people planning to hijack buses or fill them with explosives. During two-hour workshops, already being held all over the country, drivers learn to identify and evaluate concerns. Is somebody unfamiliar taking photos of the area? Is this person asking a lot of questions about the bus route?

"It's kind of unnerving—we actually had some drivers break into tears during the mock scenarios," says Oregon bus driver Janis Eggert, an NEA-ESP board member, who recently went through training. Asking drivers to be another set of eyes is a good idea, although it can go too far, she warns. "I know the Mommas, the Poppas, the Grandmas, and that community awareness gives me an edge. Can I be alert to the unusual? Yes, and everybody should be. But should I actually look for bombs? No, I don't think so. That's the job of trained police."

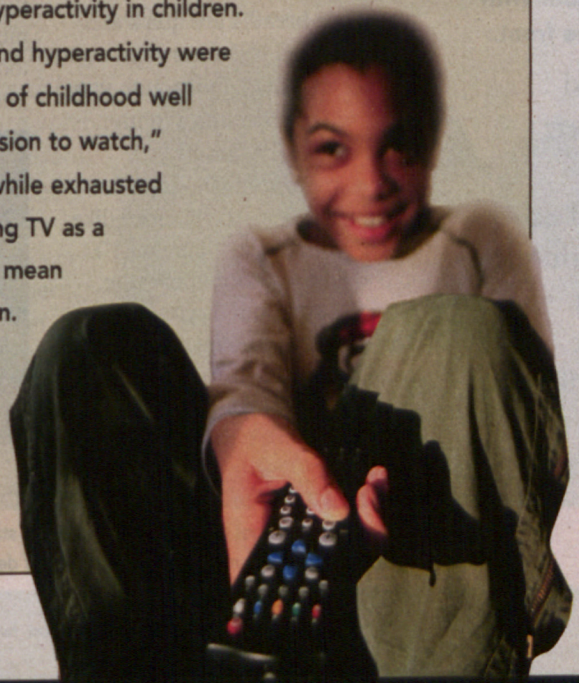
Pass the Remote!

IS SPONGEBOB SUCKING UP YOUR CHILD'S BRAIN?

No, say two Texas Tech researchers who have relieved guilty parents all over the world. According to their recent study, no link exists between television and hyperactivity in children.

Attention deficiency and hyperactivity were "recognized as a disorder of childhood well before children had television to watch," researchers noted. And, while exhausted parents may resort to using TV as a "babysitter," that doesn't mean Big Bird is egging them on.

No doubt this is a ratings bonus for many families—last year, 2- to 5-year-olds watched TV nearly 4 hours a day.



Capitol Report

Tall Orders for Higher Ed

Federal cuts to student aid, coupled with rising tuition costs, may put college out of reach, said NEA members in March, in testimony before the Commission on the Future of Higher Education.

In December, Congress slashed student aid by $12.7 billion over five years. Subsequently, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings put together the commission to produce a report this summer on the future of higher education, including access and affordability.

"We need to make sure that opportunities for higher education are available to all students," testified Catherine A. Boudreau, Massachusetts Teachers Association president. "That includes students of color, first-generation college students, and working parents. If [not]...then students, the economy, and society as a whole will suffer."

Bipartisan Budget Hope

Senators overwhelmingly passed a bipartisan budget amendment in March, adding $7 billion to education and health programs. Offered by Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Arlen Specter (R-PA), it takes steps to reverse last year's devastating cuts. "It's a positive sign that... bipartisan lawmakers may come to the aid of students, parents, and public schools," said NEA President Reg Weaver.

Got a story to share?

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PHOTOS SCHOOL BUS: STOCKTREK; BOY: GERARD LAUNET

So You Want To Be a Star

FIRST 5 YEARS

Raw footage of a new teacher discussing the solar system with her students isn't likely to be a top request on Netflix anytime soon.

BUT VIDEOTAPED teacher performances will be a key part of the Arizona Teacher Performance Assessment (ATPA) and help prepare new teachers for award-winning careers.

Allowing teachers to videotape their peak performance gives them more control than a traditional observation, says Arizona Education Association (AEA) Vice President Andrew Morrill. "We want teachers to feel very good and well-prepared about what they're submitting," he says.

Modeled after the National Board Certification program, the ATPA takes a portfolio approach and also includes essays and peer assessments. For years, AEA advocated the need for these new standards, which do double-duty as professional development for teachers in their first three years. Now, they can bid a fond farewell to "one-hit-wonder workshops," Morrill says.

TRADE SECRETS

The skills you use on the job can help another member with a dilemma on the home front.

THIS MONTH: Nikki Burgett, a theater arts teacher at A. Mario Loiederman Magnet School for Creative and Performing Arts in Silver Spring, Maryland, helps net performance butterflies.

Exit, Stage Fright

"Firsts" can be daunting—first dates, first time at the in-laws', first big speech. But there's hope! Techniques taught to theater students to promote relaxation and confidence also prevent stage fright in everyday life.

FIRST, BREATHE! All too often, our breaths are quick and shallow when we're nervous. Slow them down, in through your nose and out through slightly pursed lips. The slower you exhale, the better. Choose a fun word that sparks confidence (like my personal fave—"fabulous!"), and visualize it as you breathe. S-t-r-e-t-c-h it out as you exhale. The longer, the better. It's both calming and positive.

ATTACK TENSION with easy exercises. Focus on tense spots, like your toes, hands, even your buttocks, and squeeze those areas tightly for 10 seconds or so, then quickly release. Repeat, and feel the tension fall away.

FINALLY, YAWN! Form the biggest, open-mouthed yawns you possibly can, then smile. It's the best, most natural way to quickly relax your throat and neck muscles, steady your voice, and look confident and friendly. You might even fool yourself!

GOT A TIP TO SHARE?

We're looking for elementary school teachers to offer tips on starting a scrapbook. If you'd like to be considered, e-mail **clong@nea.org** with your name and local, a brief description of what you do, and your top three tips.

PHOTOS CAMERA: TIM HALL; TEACHER: NATHAN HAM; ILLUSTRATION: PHILLIP DVORAK

TELL US MORE

GOOD GOVERNMENT!

Do you have a great governor running for re-election? (Or, perhaps, a really bad one?) We want to hear from you about the men and women on the ballot this year, and why you're supporting them...or not. What exactly have they done to help or harm you, your colleagues, and your students? Send us your thoughts at neatoday-reply@list.nea.org.

[STATISTIC]

The percentage of **HIGH SCHOOL** graduates who took an **ADVANCED PLACEMENT** class.

SOURCE: THE COLLEGE BOARD

NCLB FUNDING

States Support NEA Lawsuit

SIX STATES and the District of Columbia, the governor of Pennsylvania, school administrators, and a coalition of California elected officials and community activists have filed legal briefs in support of NEA's legal challenge to unfunded federal mandates in the No Child Left Behind law. The amicus brief filing by Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin says the states "respectfully disagreed" with a U.S. District Court judge who dismissed NEA's lawsuit in November. The Association and the other plaintiffs have since filed an appeal. The suit argues that NCLB is unlawfully under-funded by more than $40 billion—in spite of wording in the law that makes clear its mandates will be fully paid for by the federal government. About 80 percent of districts say they have costs associated with the law not covered by federal funding, according to a report released in March by the Center on Education Policy. For more information, visit www.nea.org/lawsuit.

Clear Your Mind

Think transcendental meditation is best left to The Beatles? Well, one Hollywood bigshot's foundation is investing hundreds of thousands of dollars on the theory that transcendental meditation's mind-clearing sessions also can improve students' well-being and academic performance. The Lynch Foundation (as in cult filmmaker and *Twin Peaks* creator David Lynch) awarded $25,000 to each of six public schools to start programs this year. Students and teachers sit for about 10 minutes daily in silence, letting NCLB, bullies, and college admissions melt away. Soon, they should expect real benefits, according to two recent studies. In one, Michigan researchers found that sixth-graders had higher self-esteem and more control over emotions after meditating. In another, a Medical College of Georgia researcher discovered that meditating high school students had lower blood pressure. It's enough to make you think...about nothing.

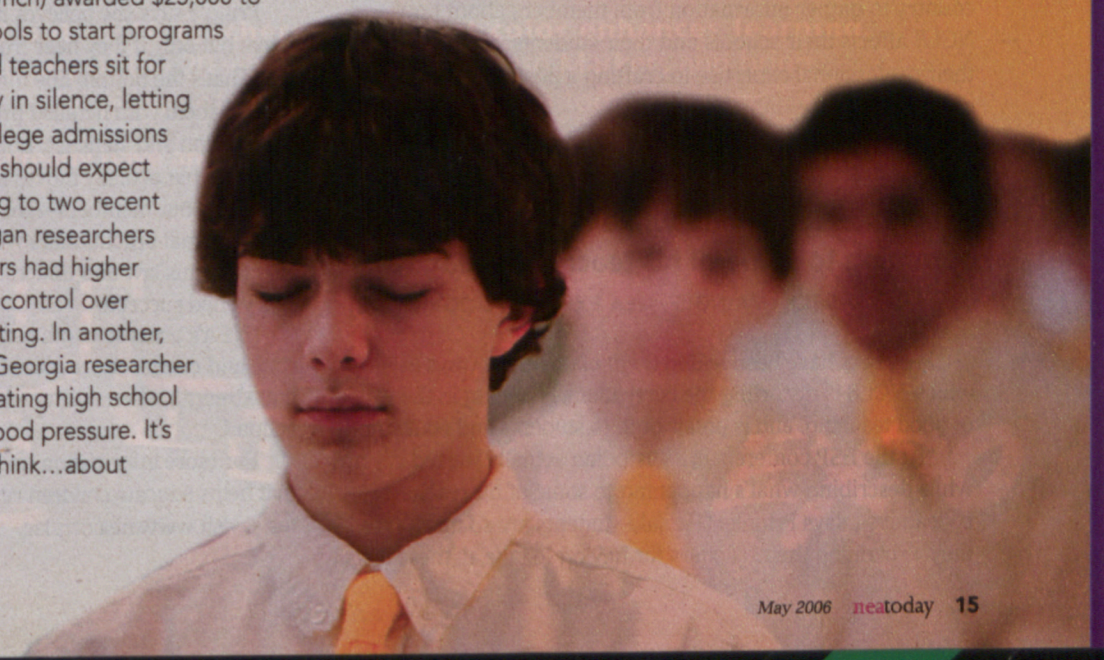


PHOTO AT BOTTOM: PHOTODISC

Moving Beyond NCLB

There's plenty of room—and opportunity—for improvement.

The so-called No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, which has introduced children all across America to the joys of bubble sheets, comes up for renewal in September 2007. That means Congress will begin considering changes to the law, possibly starting with hearings later this year. Final action may not occur until 2008 or even later, but NEA is mobilizing to play a major role.

"The problems with this law have become apparent in our classrooms and communities across the country and to people across the political spectrum," says NEA Executive Committee member Becky Pringle. "We're optimistic that Congress can be persuaded to make the major changes that are essential to keep this law from hurting the very children it was originally supposed to help."

NEA Executive Committee Member **Becky Pringle**.

NEA President Reg Weaver appointed Pringle to head an advisory committee that is guiding NEA's work in putting together proposals for Congress and strategies to get them adopted. The committee has held hearings around the country to gather information from members about how NCLB affects their schools and their students, and to enlist their professional expertise in crafting a positive agenda for changing the law.

"AT THE ESP CONFERENCE, a custodian actually started crying while describing what's happening to some of his teacher-colleagues."

—BECKY PRINGLE, NEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members have been telling them of the many ways in which NCLB is distorting the curriculum, is getting in the way of good teaching, and is unfair both to students and educators.

"At the ESP conference, a custodian actually started crying while describing what's happening to some of his teacher-colleagues," says Pringle. "He said students are so upset that they're blaming their teachers for having to take all these tests, and deciding to punish the teachers by refusing to answer the questions."

Along with the formal hearings, the committee is also collecting information in many other ways, including the NEA Web site and the work of NEA state affiliates. The Wisconsin Education Association Council, for example, has put together an important collection of NCLB stories, available on its Web site (www.weac.org/News/2005-06/dec05/WisconsinStories.pdf).

"One sixth-grade teacher said his school is spending so much time testing reading and math, they've been unable to focus on science and social studies as they used to do," says Pringle. "And the time used up by testing will force him to rush through the curriculum—so this supposed 'reform' will prevent him from teaching the material in-depth. On top of that, the results won't be valid even for math and reading, because as the test days wear on, the students start putting less and less effort into their constructed responses, so that by the last day, their test booklets are closed and they're reading novels halfway through the test period.

"So, who benefits from this enormous effort? Certainly not the students."

Pringle adds that many teachers are saying their children are being set up to fail because NCLB ignores the problems caused by poverty and doesn't even require that students be tested in a language they can understand. "Meanwhile," she says, "hard-to-find special education teachers are changing their field because the Department of Education is still telling many of them they have to get certified in several different academic subjects. This has to stop."

Pringle says she believes members of Congress are ready to listen, but only if they hear from their own constituents.

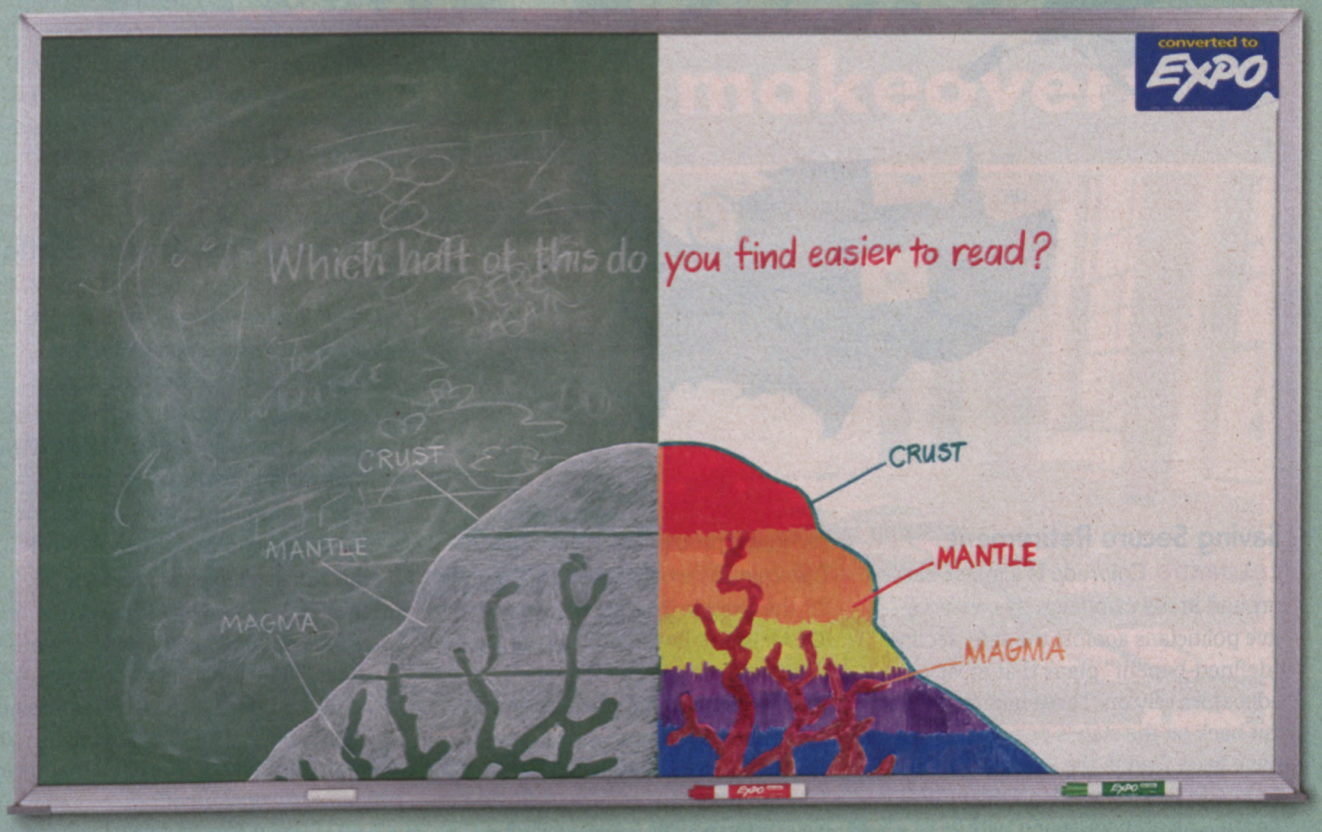
"That's the bottom line for them," she says. "Our lobbyists provide them with detailed proposals and solid background information and statistics, but when it comes to building the pressure that actually moves members of Congress, their constituents—our members—are the ones who can do that. They are the actual practitioners who see firsthand the devastating effects of this law and understand what it will take to truly help every child succeed.

"NEA's great strength is that we have members in every state and every congressional district. But we can only harness that strength when our members collectively speak up and take action."

For more information on how to change NCLB into a law that helps educate children rather than just preparing them for tests, visit www.nea.org/lac.

—ALAIN JEHLEN

PHOTO: MARK FARAM



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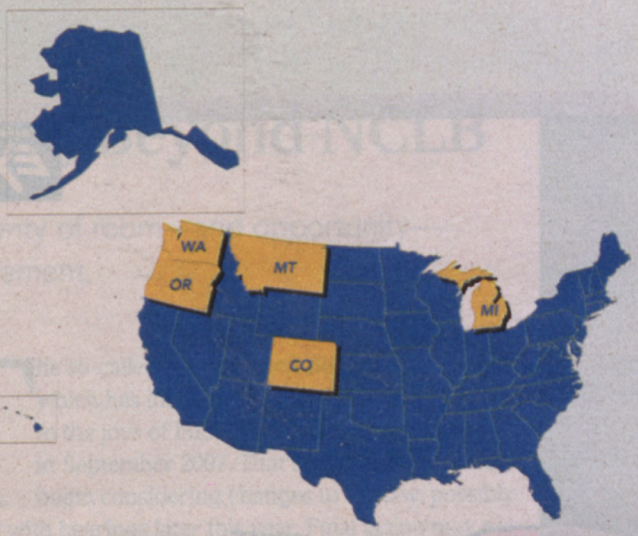

Saving Secure Retirement

COLORADO Colorado is a major battleground in the campaign by conservative politicians against the safe, secure, "defined-benefit" plans that most educators rely on. Three bills that would cut back on the state's pension promises have been filed in the legislature. The **Colorado Education Association (CEA)** is fighting all of them, along with a proposed referendum that would put new state employees into a "defined-contribution" plan instead of the existing defined-benefit plan, which guarantees a set retirement income based on years of service and salary. In defined-contribution plans, the state only agrees to put money into an employee's retirement account, with no guaranteed income.

Anti-pension advocates are increasingly active, and attacks in other states are likely. In addition to working with other groups to provide state organizations with information to help defend defined-benefit plans, NEA has built a Retirement Security Toolkit to help members understand the issues at stake. Find it at www.nea.org/retired/tools/publications.html#toolkit.

Online Personnel Records Vulnerable

OREGON The move from paper-based employment files to digital records controlled by private contractors and often located off school grounds is a growing concern. "It's an area that is becoming problematic," says Diane Trainque, state bargaining coordinator for the **Oregon Education Association (OEA).** Issues involving privacy laws, electronic spying, and identity theft are involved when computer hackers or hostile administrators gain access to electronic school personnel files.

"We have more districts moving to electronic records," says Trainque. "So we've been negotiating language in contracts to protect confidentiality. Computer files containing Social Security numbers, payroll data, credit history, school name lists, and other classified information may be accessible to unfriendly sources, says Trainque.

"The level of sophistication toward monitoring our members is significant," she adds, noting that many districts also track employees' use of e-mail, intranets, and the Internet. "There's potential here for disaster," she says.

Faculty Unionizes

WASHINGTON Faculty members at Western Washington University agreed to be represented through collective bargaining by the **United Faculty of Western Washington (UFWW),** an affiliate of the **United Faculty of Washington State** and the **Washington Education Association (WEA).**

UFWW is the third union to organize under a 2002 state law that granted collective bargaining rights to faculty at public universities and four-year colleges. Union supporters at Western will seek a larger role in decision-making, improved compensation, and increased state funding. Unionizing allows the faculty to negotiate directly with the Western administration on issues such as wages and working conditions.

Ongoing Privatization Battle

MICHIGAN A county judge upheld the **Grand Rapids Educational Support Personnel Association's (GRESPA)** charges against a transportation company's privatization of district bus drivers. The Association charges Dean Transportation with intentionally undermining the union's contract with Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS), which doesn't expire until June 30. Since 2004, Dean has supervised transportation employees who were still protected by their union contract. After the GRPS board hired Dean to provide other services in 2005, more than 170 union bus drivers, mechanics, and route planners were laid off.

GRESPA President Steve Spica called the action "illegal." The ruling allows GRESPA to continue representing the transportation employees who were laid off. Both sides are now preparing to meet in court.

Upping Minimum Wage

MONTANA According to government statistics, Montana ranks last in the nation in average annual wages—and first in the percentage of working people who hold at least three jobs. The **Montana Education Association-Montana Federation of Teachers (MEA-MFT)** is part of a coalition working on a ballot initiative that will increase the state's minimum wage by $1 an hour. A full-time employee paid the current minimum, $5.15 per hour, earns $10,000 a year.

The campaign, titled "Raise Montana," will particularly benefit many MEA-MFT members, says Eric Feaver, the Association's president. "Members are building a coalition of like-minded entities, raising funds, and collecting signatures for the November ballot," he says.

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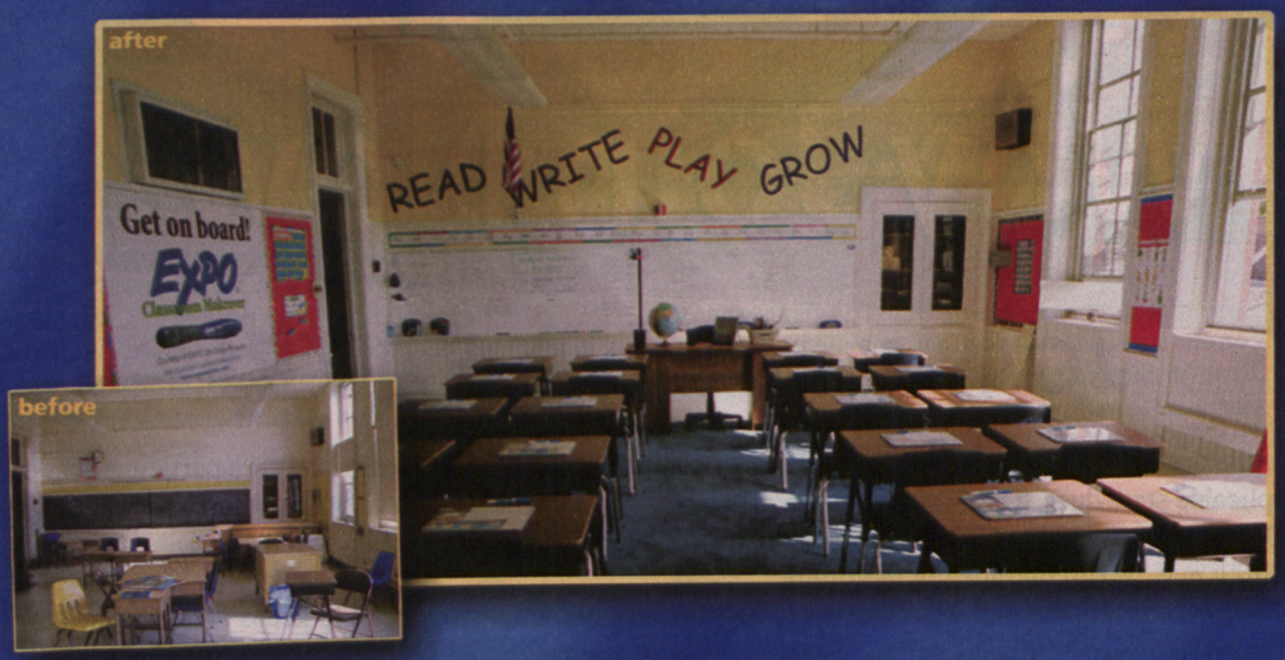

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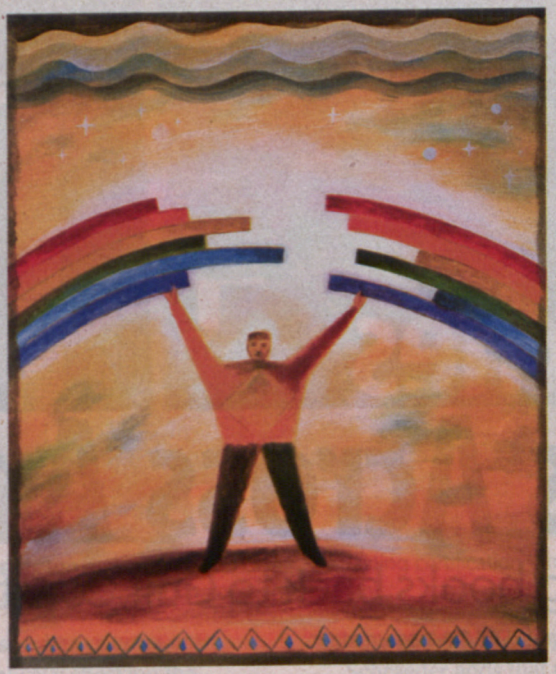
Great Public Schools for Every Child

Teaching Tolerance or Attacking Religion?

How far can schools go in teaching tolerance for gays and lesbians? Two federal courts tackle this thorny question.

It's the latest battleground in the culture wars. In the wake of several high-profile cases holding school districts liable for failing to protect gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) students from peer harassment, many schools have adopted training programs intended to reduce harassment and promote acceptance of GLBT students.

Some parents find these programs objectionable because they conflict with their deeply held religious belief that homosexuality is sinful, and they don't want the schools to undermine their parental authority by teaching a contrary lesson.



Federal courts in Maryland and Kentucky recently struggled to resolve this conflict, with differing results.

In a dispute that is still ongoing, the Montgomery County (Maryland) Board of Education last year adopted a health education curriculum designed to teach tolerance of gays and lesbians. Among other things, course materials described as a "myth" the belief that "homosexuality is a sin" and characterized certain Christian religions as "intolerant and Biblically misguided" because they are "opposed to homosexuality."

In a lawsuit filed in May 2005 by two groups of parents and citizens, a federal district court issued an injunction prohibiting the Maryland school district from implementing the curriculum. The court found that the course materials violate the Constitution by attacking the views of certain religions, while promoting the views of other religions that "are more friendly towards the homosexual lifestyle."

The school district has agreed to revise the controversial curriculum. That process is still underway.

In the Kentucky case decided in February, a federal district court ruled that parents don't have the right to have their children opt out of mandatory "student diversity training" designed to stop the harassment of GLBT students.

The program adopted by the Board of Education of Boyd County, Kentucky, consists of a one-hour video, followed by comments from an instructor and questions from students. Students who refuse to attend receive an unexcused absence.

The school district agreed to implement the mandatory training for both staff and students as part of the settlement of a 2003 lawsuit filed by GLBT students charging that the district had turned a blind eye to peer harassment and had illegally denied official recognition to a Gay Straight Alliance student club.

The parents had claimed that the training violated their right to practice their religion because the diversity training "promoted values contrary to their religious beliefs" and "attempted to change [their children's] religious and ideological views regarding homosexuality."

The court disagreed. Merely exposing students to "views [that are] contrary to their religious beliefs" does not infringe on their religious freedom, the court said. Plus, there was no evidence that any student "was compelled to disavow his or her religious beliefs" or to "endorse homosexuality."

The court also ruled that the program did not violate the plaintiffs' "parental rights" to direct the upbringing and religious training of their children. Parents, the court held, have no "fundamental right to dictate curriculum," even where they may have "genuine moral disagreements with the school's choice of subject matter."

Of special note, the court rejected the parents' reliance on the Maryland decision to challenge the Boyd County program. The Boyd County program, the court said, "is a far cry" from the curriculum struck down in Maryland, which denigrated several religions and attempted to "elevate certain religious views over others."

The lesson from these two cases is simple: One way school districts can fulfill their legal obligation to provide a safe learning environment for GLBT students is to mandate anti-harassment training. And these lessons of tolerance can and should be taught without assailing religion.

As the judge in the Maryland case cautioned: School officials can "achieve the goals of advocating tolerance and providing health-related information" without teaching "such controversial topics as whether homosexuality is a sin, whether AIDS is God's judgment on homosexuals, and whether churches that condemn homosexuality are on theologically solid ground."

—MICHAEL D. SIMPSON
NEA OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

ILLUSTRATION: CORBIS

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Books From The Heart

Hit the Road, Hit the Books

Wisconsin support professionals go the extra mile to gain certification.

The Marshfield school district where Tess Upton works lies in the heart of Wisconsin, a state known for its picturesque river towns, shimmering lakes, hidden valleys, and high mountain peaks. This natural beauty sustains Upton as she crisscrosses the state in search of professional development opportunities.

"I can drive three hours in any direction before leaving the state," says Upton, a library assistant at Madison Elementary School. She's one of thousands of Wisconsin education support professionals (ESPs) who scour the state for classes that count toward certification. The ESP certificate is awarded through the Professional Development Academy (PDA), a Madison-based nonprofit supported by the Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC).

Tess Upton moves one class closer to attaining certification through WEAC's Professional Development Academy.

Launched in 1994, the program's enrollment is now 8,500 strong. Almost 900 ESPs have earned certification since its inception. Still, professional development for ESPs remains far more sporadic than for teachers, so when courses are offered, they tend to fill up fast. "I'm always checking the [WEAC] Web site to see what courses are up," Upton says. If a class is being taught far away, she says, she and other Marshfield ESPs often "get a hotel room and make a weekend of it."

When PDA was created in 1991 to promote and deliver staff development for WEAC members, educators, and other school district personnel, it didn't offer training for ESPs. "One of the WEAC leaders...was a school secretary," says Debra Berndt, a former high school teacher who's now the program's director. "She told the others how there was little training available for support staff." Before long, a design team was formed, ultimately deciding on a "career continuum" approach, in which participants move from instruction in a variety of content areas to more concentrated learning in specific topics.

The program evolved into two levels. The first requires 40 hours of class time in four core areas: communication, legal and ethical studies, behavior management, and growth and development. Certification also requires a number of electives, including studies in areas—such as nutrition, hazardous materials, and technology—applicable to ESPs' daily job responsibilities. Level II certification requires 80 additional instructional hours, focusing on one or two job-specific content areas, including substitute teaching, classroom management, and labor studies.

The PDA does not conduct classes of its own, but approves and awards credit for courses offered by school districts, universities, professional groups, and educational service agencies. ESPs usually pay an application fee, in addition to the cost of attending classes other than those offered by their home district. The challenge is finding the "right class at the right time and the right place," says Upton. "If I want to take a weekday class, I have to take a day [off] work without pay." Upton knows ESPs who will get up at 4 a.m. on a Saturday and drive three hours to attend an 8 a.m. class. For some, it takes years to graduate.

While certification includes a transcript for district personnel files, it may or may not result in a pay raise. "Our district went above and beyond the call of duty," says Sue Schraeder, a special needs teaching assistant with Grant Elementary School in Marshfield. "Once our administrators realized how their support staff could become better workers and more self-confident, they anted up."

Under the current contract between her school district and the Marshfield Auxiliary Personnel Association, Level I graduates receive a one-time bonus of $300, while those who complete Level II get $600. Also, for every hour of class that Marshfield ESPs complete, their hourly wage increases by a penny. "You can earn 40 cents more per hour simply for attending class," she says.

Schraeder adds that the program has helped her work better with all students, from kids with disabilities to bullies. "It taught me different strategies," she says. "You learn how to notice things on the playground or the school bus, and how to stop something negative from happening."

Her experience is typical, says Berndt. "Participants tell us they feel so much more valued in the education community," she says. "They also feel quite energized by learning new things."

—JOHN ROSALES

More ESP stories in this issue:

> **Bus drivers enlisted for homeland security** – *Page 13*
> **ESP local fights privatization in Michigan** – *Page 18*
> **What's hot in ESP jobs? School translators** – *Page 34*

PHOTO: DAN YOUNG

READ & RENEW

Feed your mind and lighten your load with books recommended by your colleagues.

BY SABRINA HOLCOMB

A journey through a great book can be the ultimate mental road trip and your ticket to a renewed sense of purpose. But with almost 200,000 new books published in America each year, where do you start? Never fear. NEA educators have assembled a perfect road map to summer reading you'll benefit from all year long—tips of the trade and favorite books to help refresh your professional skills, recharge your imagination, and rejuvenate your spirit.

You can read the signs, the telltale clues that your school is shedding its winter coat as summer fast approaches. The students are restless, everyone is a little giddy with graduation fever, and you're asking yourself that all-important question: How can you make the most of that brief stretch of promise and possibility between the end of this school year and the start of a new one?

Remember that splendid booklist you're painstakingly preparing for your students as a way to broaden their summer horizons? What about taking a page from your own list? You don't even have to feel guilty about reading for personal pleasure, says NEA reading specialist Barbara Kapinus. Researchers have found that whether teachers read for personal fulfillment, professional inspiration, or just plain fun, their reading informs their instruction and adds an extra dimension to their teaching.

You're already adept at getting sheer joy out of a good book. Here's what the experts say about getting pleasure *and* pragmatic benefits from your booklist this summer—and well into the next school year.

> NEVER JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS MOVIE.
>
> J.W. EAGAN

Read Out of Your Field

Think in terms of "multi-level" books, says Kapinus—one level helps you in your personal life; another helps you in your classroom. For instance, self-help books like Stephen R. Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and *First Things First* can inspire educators in all areas of their lives, she says.

Or try reading one book this summer in an entirely new field. "When educators explore topics such as business, sociology, history, and science, there's great potential for new ideas," Kapinus explains. "Creation happens when two fields meet." Ordinarily an educator wouldn't choose a business book like *Good to Great* by Jim Collins. "But it will help anyone, no matter what their job, do their best," says Kapinus.

PHOTO: JONNIE MILES

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body. —JOSEPH ADDISON

"Read poetry, blogs, magazines, letters to the editor, and books on other cultures and countries," suggests Michelle Commeyras, professor of language and literacy education at the University of Georgia and co-editor of *Teachers as Readers: The Importance of Reading in Teachers' Classrooms and Lives*. She also recommends sharing your literary musings on a free journaling Web site such as www.livejournal.com and inviting other educators to join the electronic discussion. "It's fun and, for some teachers, really transformative."

Join a Professional Book Club

For truly transformative summer reading, nothing beats the shared experience of a professional book group, say devotees of the practice. Running the gamut from ad hoc book groups started by like-minded colleagues to professionally sanctioned Teachers as Readers (TAR) groups, such gatherings offer educators the opportunity to enjoy literature, commune with colleagues, and get peer support for a heady exchange of new ideas.

"Reading and talking about literature has made me a better, more reflective reader," says Michelle Shreeves, a first-grade teacher and chair of the Maryland TAR Council. "It's also made me a better teacher because I get to practice what I preach." An added benefit, says fellow book club member and middle school teacher Teresa McCain, is that "we get to interact with fellow professionals we normally wouldn't mix with because we're in different schools and grade levels."

Each TAR group has its own personality and culture: some read strictly for professional development, some for personal enjoyment, and some balance both. "We choose books that reflect our lives as educators," says Marianne George, a member of a Chicago TAR group that reads mostly fiction and holds its monthly meetings at a family-style Italian restaurant with a relaxed atmosphere, great food, and "nice quiet corners where we can talk."

George, a former elementary school teacher who now teaches introductory literacy courses at the University of Illinois in Chicago, describes the group's rationale. "We make a conscious decision to read books that give us different cultural lenses, which is so important in today's classrooms." One of George's favorites is *My Sister's Keeper* by Jodi Picoult, a thought-provoking story about a girl who's conceived to provide her sister with a bone marrow transplant. "It makes you think about the choices people make and the reason for those choices," says George. "The parents of our students have to make choices we may not always understand, and there's more to the story than what's obvious."

WORDS MEAN MORE THAN WHAT IS SET DOWN ON PAPER. IT TAKES THE HUMAN VOICE TO INFUSE THEM WITH DEEPER MEANING.

MAYA ANGELOU

Try Audio

Just as sharing books can bring an extra dimension to reading, so can *hearing* them. Books on tape are often portrayed as a great alternative for busy people who don't have the time to really read, but there's actually a different dynamic to hearing some books that may surprise you.

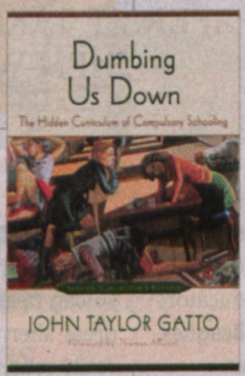
"Some authors come from cultures with a strong history of oral storytelling, and hearing them speak their books is even richer than reading them," says NEA's Kapinus. "Hearing Toni Morrison read *Song of Solomon* takes my breath away and brings an intimacy to the experience. The same is true of Frank McCourt reading *Angela's Ashes*." Kapinus also recommends hearing author Tony Hillerman read *The Leaphorn and Chee Audio Trilogy*, a collection of his best-selling mystery series featuring detectives on a Navajo reservation. "Hillerman's gravely voice is perfect for the novels' Western setting," says Kapinus. "You can just picture him, rocking on a dusty porch, telling his story."

Audio books have become so popular, online book publishers are in fierce competition for a slice of the growing iPod market. Web sites like podiobooks.com are offering free, serialized audio books that can be downloaded to iPods or other portable devices. But the hottest new trend in the audio book market is online book clubs that offer audio versions of books read by fans, not professional actors. Interested in volunteering your voice? You can read for Web sites like LiteralSystems.org and Librivox.org, which has hundreds of volunteers from all over the world who record books in more than a half-dozen languages.

PHOTO: ANTONELLO TURCHETTI

A Reading Map

Now that you're ready to kick back and read, let your peers offer a few suggestions. Educators have recommended books—and other media—that have been especially helpful to them in four key categories: professional development, books that inspire, entertainment, and resources to share with students.

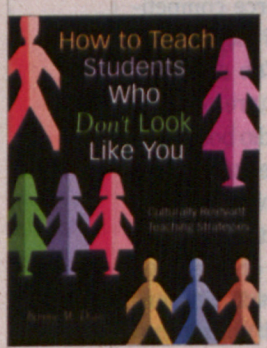


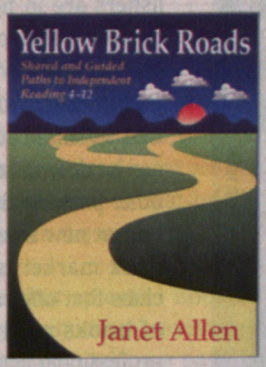
Refresh Your Skills

Professional Development

Rosalind Pijeaux Hale, an education professor displaced by Hurricane Katrina, is on leave from New Orleans' Xavier University and currently teaching at Miles College in Birmingham. While many multicultural texts are geared toward White teachers working with students of color, Hale regularly tells her ed students, most of whom are Black, that they will most likely teach in an unfamiliar cultural setting. "The ethnicity may be the same, but the background is not." Hale recommends **How to Teach Students Who Don't Look Like You: Culturally Relevant Teaching Strategies** by NEA member Bonnie M. Davis because it "gives you the opportunity to reflect and respond rather than react. That's a big plus."

As she nears the end of her first year of teaching high school in Pleasant Hills, Montana, Jennifer Dunaway "can't say enough fabulous things" about the path she's taken down Janet Allen's **Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading 4-12**. "People forget that we all teach reading," says Dunaway. "Allen really approaches literacy from a cross-curriculum perspective. This is not just an English teacher's book." Allen uses cartoons for comic relief but also to illustrate how useful they can be pedagogically. Inspired by Allen's example, Dunaway used a Charlie Brown strip with empty bubbles to teach dialogue and punctuation—with great success. "Too many books give you great ideas but not the tools to use them," Dunaway says.





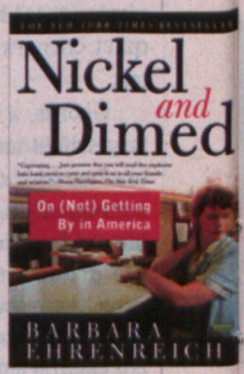
Looking for insight from a maverick mentor? Diane Keys recommends picking up one of John Taylor Gatto's books, such as **Dumbing Us Down** or **A Different Kind of Teacher**. "He's very valuable to a new teacher to show that we need to rise above mediocrity," says Keys, a sixth-grade teacher in Anaheim, California. While in grad school, Keys drew on Gatto's work for a paper about standardized testing and how students have become isolated from their elders. "Gatto's point is that we should have less homework, more family time, and we should value family as an important structure," says Keys. "He's a big advocate for getting the corporate world involved as a form of community service. I used that quite a bit in my papers—it's wonderful stuff for debates."

It doesn't just feel like you're constantly making decisions in your classroom—you are. Teachers typically have 1,500 interactions with their students each day. Without a classroom management plan in place, the sheer volume of decisions can be overwhelming. Mark Lindholm of Los Alamitos, California, who came to teaching six years ago, found **NEA's Classroom Management** kit for K–12 classrooms a well-organized introduction to the topic. "Overall," says Lindholm, "it's a good resource as a starting point for new teachers." The small but intensive kit has a resource guide booklet, video, and CD-ROM featuring veteran teachers and paraprofessionals in their own classrooms sharing philosophies and advice about self-reflection, classroom arrangement, and establishing norms.

Rejuvenate Your Spirit

Inspirational

Is there a better way to spend a summer afternoon than swinging in a hammock with a good book? Not if that book is **Teaching With Fire,** edited by Sam M. Intrator and Megan Scribner—a collection of poems culled specifically to inspire educators. Poems from Langston Hughes, Billy Collins, Pablo Neruda, and a host of others, including teachers, fill its pages with messages about art, creativity, purpose, and motivation. "Beautiful, thought-provoking, inspiring poetry to encourage teachers," observes Karen Kitt, a middle school language arts teacher in Redmond, Oregon. She's in good company. Education luminaries Jonathan Kozol and Deborah Meier praise the book, with Kozol calling it "a glorious collection of the poetry that has restored the faith of teachers in the highest, most transcendent values of their work with children."

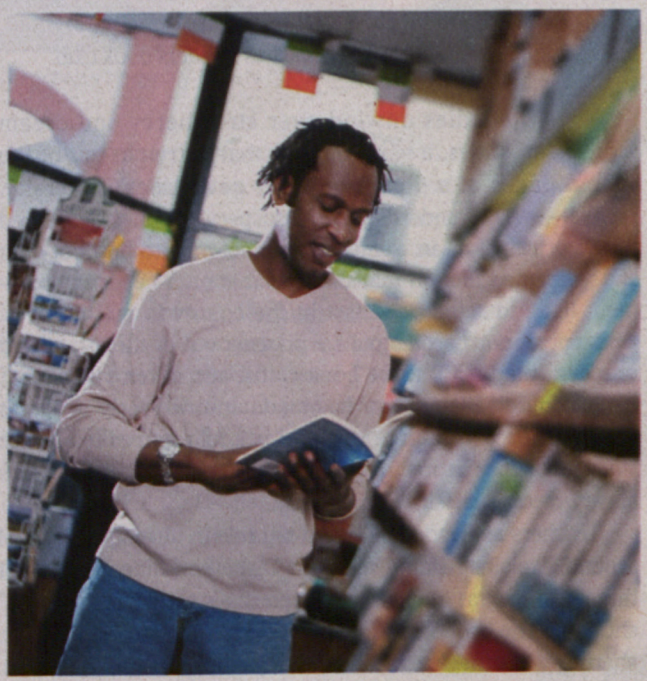


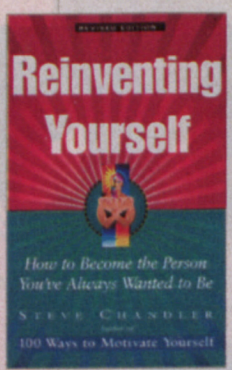
It might seem surprising that a look at beleaguered workers in America, struggling to make ends meet for themselves and their

My books are water; those of the great geniuses are wine. Everybody drinks water. —MARK TWAIN

families with $6-an-hour jobs, would fall on anyone's list of most-inspiring reads, but that's just where Barbara Ehrenreich's best-selling **Nickel and Dimed** lands for Illinois teacher Bonnie Muren. "Many of our school's parents are low income," she says. "The author's experiences gave me real insight into the challenges our parents face daily"—and some common cents inspiration.

☛ Where do you fall in the two categories—victim or owner—that author Steve Chandler lays out in his book, **Reinventing Yourself: How To Become the Person You've Always Wanted To Be**? For instance, do you describe yourself as "focused" on your many tasks or "swamped"? The book helped Arizona alternative high school teacher Joe Thomas become a focuser. At 192 pages, it's a short, easy read, with lots of payoff. "He focuses on avoiding 'right or wrong' decision-making; talking about values and agreements instead of rules and expectations; and managing agreements, not





people," says Thomas. Think any of that could come in handy when school starts? We do, too.

☛ It jumped off movie screens in 1988, commanding attention and respect, just like its subjects. **Stand and Deliver** was so powerful that, nearly 20 years later, the story of Los Angeles high school teacher Jaime Escalante empowering his troubled, low-income students to ace the Advanced Placement calculus exam still resonates. Forty percent of you crowned Escalante's story—as depicted by Edward James Olmos and a cast of talented (and mostly unknown) teens—the "Most Inspiring" in our online Silver Screen Awards poll. Why not rent it and remind yourself how great it feels to be an awe-inspiring teacher?

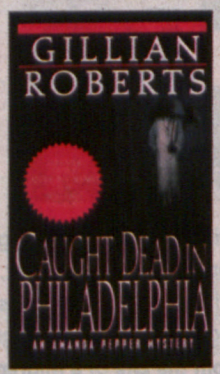
Recharge Your Imagination

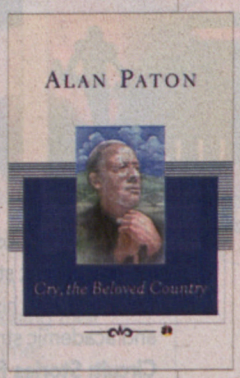
Entertainment

☛ The single most recommended book by NEA members, **The Secret Life of Bees** by Sue Monk Kidd, is "delightful!" exclaims Devon Hamner, a Nebraska kindergarten teacher. In this coming-of-age story, a neglected 14-year-old flees her home with a single clue to her dead mother's origins. If you haven't read it already—it was on the *New York Times* best-seller list in 2002—your colleagues urge you to exercise that library card immediately. "It reminded me of why I'm there for my students, even when they don't want me to be," says Amanda Pickrell, an Indianapolis elementary school teacher.

☛ No beach bag is complete without detective fiction—something to make you shiver in the heat! If you've already cased the joint with Stephanie Plum, the snoop at the center of Janet Evanovich's ever-popular series, then introduce yourself to a fellow teacher-turned-detective. Amanda Pepper, an English teacher at an elite Philadelphia private school, starts digging for more than misplaced modifiers when she finds a fellow educator dead on her couch. The first in a series by Gillian Roberts, **Caught Dead in Philadelphia** won an Anthony Award for Best First Mystery Novel. "English teachers, we are not alone!" crows Lynne Ravas, a middle school English teacher in Pennsylvania. "Have a good laugh over another teacher's headaches."

☛ **Cry, the Beloved Country**, Alan Paton's powerful novel about a Zulu pastor searching for his son in apartheid South Africa, is a





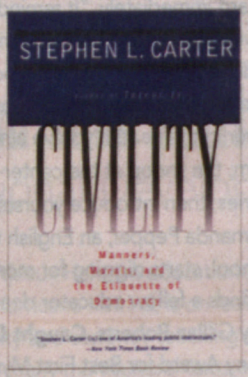
deeply moving experience. "It's such a passionate book, and has so many surprises!" says special education teacher Marie Headings. "One of the things I liked: it takes the abstractness of apartheid and makes it so personal, and you can see that people can be good, even under horrible circumstances." Before you turn a single page, try this, Headings suggests. Listen to the book on tape or CD. The African place names are like music, and the voices of Paton's rich characters will haunt your summer naps.

☛ It's not just another country, it's another world in Georges Lopez's one-room French countryside school—but a recognizable one. Like yours, his students delight in new lessons and despair when their good pants get muddy. They fight. They grieve. They giggle. But unlike yours, it all happens on film. Called **Être et Avoir** or **To Be and To Have,** this award-winning documentary is sweet, but real. Shortly after filming, Lopez retired from 35 years of teaching.

PHOTO: STOCKBYTE

Review with Students

Resources to Share



☛ Puzzles, patterns, and possibilities abound in Blue Balliett's and Brett Helquist's **Chasing Vermeer.** Chicago sixth-graders Petra and Calder, who share a love of art and blue M&Ms, are hot on the trail of a thief who has stolen a Vermeer painting, sparking international outrage. Will they piece the clues together before the painting is lost forever? Middle-grade readers can help solve the mystery and decode hidden messages in some of the book's illustrations. "It's kind of like a *Da Vinci Code* for kids," says Teresa McCain, a sixth-grade teacher in Salisbury, Maryland.

☛ What ever happened to service with a smile? Why are we plagued by road rage? When did individual rights become more important than civic harmony? Yale law professor Stephen L. Carter addresses issues of trust, generosity, and the state of manners in his latest book, **Civility.** "If you've ever wondered how society evolved to include such high levels of rudeness, this book is a great read," says Catherine Kellerman, a substitute teacher in Newaygo County, Michigan.

☛ In 12 short stories, Francisco Jiménez, who illegally entered California with his family as a boy, narrates his childhood experiences and academic struggles as a Mexican migrant farm worker. "**The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child** is a book that my Latino students can identify with," says elementary school teacher Milagro Orantes. "Last year, one of my sixth-graders told me he didn't like reading. But when I gave him this book, he came back to school after just one weekend and was elated talking about it!"

☛ The true story of a high school coach and his team, **Remember the Titans**, chronicles the 1971 school year when Herman Boone, played by Denzel Washington, was hired as head coach of a racially divided and hostile football team, the T.C. Williams Titans. In our Silver Screen Awards online poll, Washington beat out Gene Hackman in *Hoosiers* and Samuel L. Jackson in *Coach Carter*, among others, for Best Coach in a movie. If that's not reason enough to watch it with your students, do so for its lessons of trust and unity, to foster team and character-building, and because it'll make you feel good.

—WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY MARY ELLEN FLANNERY, CYNTHIA KOPKOWSKI, CINDY LONG, AND REBECCA L. WEBER

A Tale of Two Book Clubs

Teacher book clubs range from district-sponsored professional development groups to cozy book salons with their own unique brand. *NEA Today* takes a look at both.

Can We Talk?

With promises of coffee and conversation, NEA Today *lured Virginia educators Beth Yankey, Diane Sunshine, Susan Briscoe, and Brenda Lewis to a local Barnes and Noble café to chat about the amazing success of their Teachers as Readers book club.*

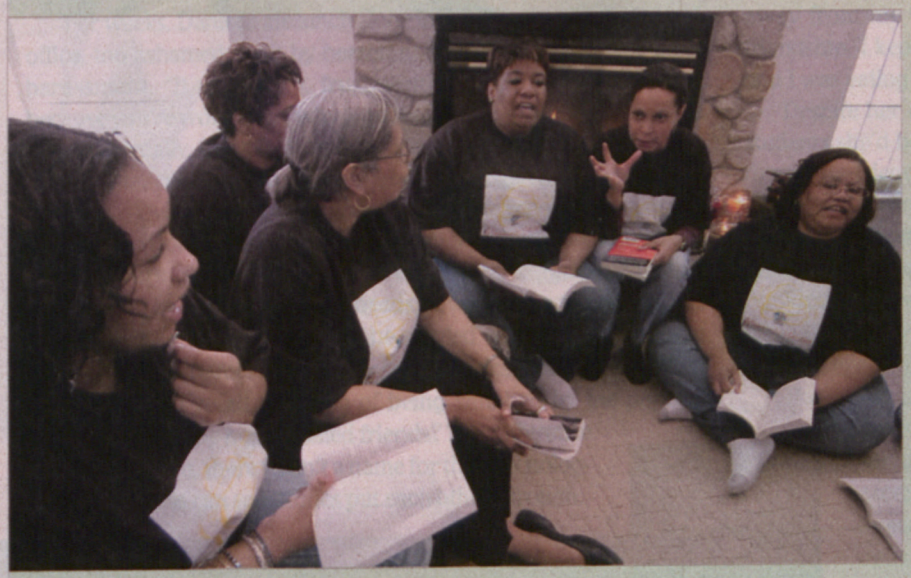
As the ladies unwind over strawberry and cream smoothies, a story unfolds that's straight out of the pages of a good book. It's got heroes, adversity, secrets—even an underdog. An unsuspecting educator is hired as the principal of an elementary school only to find out *after* she's accepted the job that the school is on a needs improvement list and rated dead last in the county in math scores. Undaunted, our heroine pulls a phoenix out of the ashes, and one dedicated staff, three book clubs, and seven years later, Loch Lomond Elementary has made annual yearly progress (AYP) for three years in a row and is a fully accredited Prince William County School of Excellence. "It's a great story," says library/media specialist Beth Yankey.

Teachers as Readers played a big role in turning the school around, explains reading specialist Diane Sunshine. "We've got three TAR groups in one school, and that's almost unheard of," she says. The group agrees that reading and, most important, sharing what they've read, has been central to their success. "We don't just read professional development books for the

The Loch Lomond reading group meets in Barnes and Noble.

PHOTO: SABRINA HOLCOMB

A book is like a garden carried in the pocket. —CHINESE PROVERB



Maryland's Heavenly Honies bond over books.

sake of reading," says principal Brenda Lewis. "We choose books with strategies we can apply right away."

Kindergarten teacher Susan Briscoe waves her copy of *Literacy Links* by Laura Robb, a book of practical strategies for developing emergent literacy in at-risk children. "I started reading this book and the very next day, I used three great ideas from it in my classroom. That's how good it is." Everyone agrees that it's the best book they've read as a team. "We're writing a grant proposal based on some of the ideas from the book about bringing school, home, and community together," Yankey says, adding that their reading often reinforces what they're doing in the classroom. "What we read often affirms what we're already doing," she says. "And it sparks conversation between colleagues. Everyone benefits, whether or not they're in the book club."

Now that the school year is coming to a close, the book lovers plan to catch up on their personal reading—for business and pleasure. But, in lieu of the school library, they'll gather on their back porches with a large plate of cookies and a cold pitcher of lemonade.

Book Buzz

If the story of the Loch Lomond Teachers as Readers group belongs in a novel, then the members of Maryland's Hebbville Teachers book club are ready for the movies. From their celestial name, the Heavenly Honies, to their beehive logo worn on personalized T-shirts, the Honies do everything with flair.

Just a year and a half old, the Heavenly Honies is the brainchild of paraeducator Orlando Felton and fourth-grade teacher Danielle Lewis, who bonded over their love of books. "We both love to read," says Felton, "and one day we were talking about books and it was so obvious—we should start a book club for the teachers at our school!"

The popular book group—18 members and growing—gathers monthly at Lewis' house, where her library provides a perfect setting. "We gather in a beautiful room with a crackling fireplace and lots of candles, Felton says. "It's the perfect place to talk about books."

It's also a perfect place to share delicious potluck feasts and prepare wonderful gift baskets for the authors Felton invites to speak to the group, says Valerie Clark, the group's historian. That's right—the book club actually has a historian who keeps a scrapbook of photos and keepsakes commemorating the gatherings.

Clark, a special ed paraeducator, talks enthusiastically about the impact the book club has had on her teaching. "I read more with my kids now—exploring stories and asking questions, which is important, because they need the extra help," she says. But the biggest benefit of all may be the group's influence on collegial relationships. "Reading together has helped us relax and get to know each other as people," confides Clark. It's helped all of us be better colleagues." nea

Web Exclusives

More Books

No way could we fit all your great suggestions into one article! So visit the Web for more recommendations from your colleagues and a list of hot books for the summer—plus links to the NEA Professional Library, online book clubs, and other Web resources.

Speak Up

What do you think? Grade the books we've featured and write your own reviews and comments.

Find It All At:

www.neatoday.org

Special Features

Read *Stop the Brain Drain* for ways to keep your own kids exercising their reading muscles this summer.

Find out how Miss America Jennifer Berry and other NEA celebs are feeding their inner bookworm.

Get tips for starting a reading club at your school.

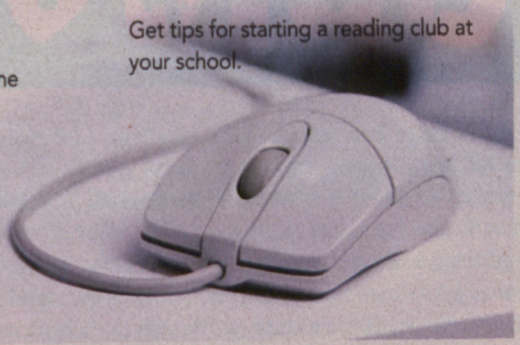


PHOTO TOP: SANDY SCHAEFFER; PHOTO RIGHT: FSTOP

Sugar AND Spice!

For girls, the worst bullies are often their best friends. Long aware of the symptoms of social aggression, educators are now trying to find the ingredients for a cure.

BY CINDY LONG

It was still dark outside when Danielle, a ninth-grader from a Philadelphia suburb, woke up surrounded by giggling and whispering girls. She was at a sleepover—a party she'd been looking forward to. Some of the girls held magic markers, others held tubes of paint. Two or three gripped camera phones. While she slept, the girls had squeezed paint into her hair and scribbled on her face, then snapped pictures of their handiwork. By the following Monday, the pictures had circulated to most of her classmates. If students didn't receive them by e-mail or see them on the Internet, they found them pasted in the hallways throughout the school. Danielle was humiliated.

"I didn't want to go back to school," she says. "I couldn't wait for the weekends. That was the only time there was nobody making fun of me. It was like, wherever I went, they knew—on the bus, at lunch, everywhere. My teachers couldn't help me. All they did was let me leave a few minutes early from class so I could get to the next class without being teased in the hallways."

PHOTO: DAVID DE LOSSY

For weeks, Danielle ate lunch alone in the library or in the nurse's office, too ashamed to sit by herself in the cafeteria and face more harassment. "It was scary, frustrating, upsetting, and puzzling, because you're wondering why [you're] the one they have a problem with." Normally, an upbeat, talkative teenager surrounded by girlfriends, Danielle began to withdraw, becoming quiet, depressed, and watchful. A victim of social aggression, the psychological wounds hurt as much, or even more deeply, as if she were punched in the face.

There are girls like Danielle at every school—girls who slink through the hallways with their heads down, trying to be invisible, hoping that some other girl will be singled out. Some argue that every girl is like Danielle at some point in her academic career. What woman doesn't recall the sting of being snubbed by the popular girls? Or worse, by her so-called friends? The difference is that, back then, there wasn't a name for the psychological torture girls can sometimes put each other through.

VERONICA: I just killed my best friend.
JD: Worst enemy.
VERONICA: Same difference.
HEATHERS, 1989

With the publication of *Odd Girl Out* by bestselling author Rachel Simmons and *Queen Bees and Wannabes* by Rosalind Wiseman, the notion of social or relational aggression—the psychological warfare practiced by many school-age girls—has been brought to light. And more educators are beginning to do something about it in schools nationwide. By helping address conflict in overt, healthy ways, they're helping create more confident, assertive girls who are better students and better people.

"Children and adolescents break each other's hearts with social aggression, and they tell us they often do it right in their classrooms and that their teachers don't know," says Marion K. Underwood, a professor of psychology at the University of Texas at Dallas and author of *Social Aggression Among Girls*. But, she adds, "I believe teachers know vastly more than children give them credit for and are in an ideal position to intervene, both directly and in more subtle ways."

If they don't, they aren't creating a culture of learning, says Wiseman. If educators don't understand the rules, relationships, and power structures of "Girl World," she says, "no matter how good they are as teachers, they won't be in control of the classroom and learning." Simmons agrees, likening the teachers in such classrooms to those in the Peanuts cartoons, where students hear nothing from the teacher but a muffled "Mwha, mwha, mwwhhaaa."

CADY: I think I'm going to join the Matheletes.
REGINA: No! No, no. You cannot do that. That is social suicide. DAMN! You are so lucky to have us to guide you!
MEAN GIRLS, 2004

On a frigid February afternoon in New York, seventh- and eighth-graders from an Upper West Side prep school filed into the auditorium to hear Simmons talk about social aggression. A more sophisticated bunch of kids than most, it could be a tough crowd. She dove right in with a personal story.

"When I was 8 years old, my friend Abby started whispering secrets about me," Simmons began. "Abby told all the girls to run away from me whenever I came near, but, desperate for their friendship, I kept running after them. Soon, I had no friends at all, and I was eating lunch alone every day."

Despite her anguish as a third-grade victim, Simmons told the students she'd become a bully by the time she was 14. "I did something to a friend that I was very sorry about. Years later, I finally apologized—apologies don't expire—and that helped us both. But the point is, even though we're supposed to be so sweet and innocent, not everyone is nice all of the time."

Simmons walked up to the front of the stage and looked around. "I know you guys aren't nice to each other all of the time," she said matter-of-factly.

The auditorium fell quiet. Finally, a few nervous laughs and students shifting in their seats broke the silence. Simmons acknowledged that it's not comfortable for people to accept that they've been mean, but friends who engage in social aggression are, in fact, bullies. "You probably think of a bully as that short, fat guy on the playground who's bald with a hairy chest even though he's only in fifth grade, but the fact is, the most hurtful bullies can be your own friends—people who are nice to you sometimes, but can make you feel small inside on a regular basis," she said. "This kind of bullying leads to the loss or damage of friendships, and that hurts us the most."

Later that day, Simmons spoke to the school's faculty about how to handle social aggression. For years, educators who noticed girls bullying each other would shrug, figuring, "that's just the way they are at this age." But if educators don't call aggression or bullying by their proper names, Simmons explained, then the perpetrators live above the law and victims have no recourse.

"Girls' psychological health and leadership potential are related to their relationships," said Simmons. "We need to help them with social learning, help them become better at speaking their minds directly, and give them an alternative to bullying. If they tell you they didn't know their actions were mean, expand their knowledge of aggression, and be clear about what's acceptable and what's not."

In *Queen Bees and Wannabes*, the inspiration for the movie *Mean Girls*, Wiseman takes the reader into "Girl World," where the power of cliques is absolute and the rules of the popular must be followed. Nonconformists are kicked out of the group and subjected to the vicious, soul-crushing social aggression that damages self-esteem and ruins social status. Research has shown, however, that the targets aren't the only ones who suffer. The bullies themselves, who win friends mainly through fear and intimidation, aren't genuinely well-liked and often have low self-esteem. By addressing the problem of social aggression, educators can help curb the long-term effects on the victims as well as the perpetrators, such as depression, substance abuse, and even suicide.

After the girls at the slumber party turned on Danielle, she turned inward, but she's an articulate girl who's mature for her age. Rather than let the experience destroy her, she's learning from it. She figures the girls who are bullies "find someone who is vulnerable and pick on them. They do it to make themselves feel better about what's going on inside of them," she says. "In my school, there are always people who are pushing others around, thinking they are the best and thinking they have no rules but their own."

And that, of course, is where educators should come into play. In Danielle's case, it took longer to get her teachers' attention than she would have liked. In art class, for instance, she'd sculpted a shoe from clay, then painted, glazed, and fired it, only to have her former friends smash it on the floor. Her teacher only noticed after Danielle's project was late.

Most educators, however, are aware of the problem, and some, like Sarah Hawley, have strategies they employ for dealing with it. "I have a group of girls in my class who torment, threaten, and otherwise terrorize each other and other students in the class," says Hawley, who teaches sixth grade in Richmond, Indiana. "It takes up too much of our time and makes me more frustrated than I let on."

With the help of a part-time counselor, Hawley has set up an anti-bullying campaign as a way to channel the negative energy in a positive way. Designed as an education and awareness-raising campaign, the program is student-led. Participants speak to other classes about bullying, design and hang posters about recognizing signs of bullying, and work as peer mentors. One of the most successful elements of the campaign is a weekly question-and-answer session. Each classroom is equipped with a box in which students can drop anonymous questions about bullying. The anti-bullying campaign leaders answer them—with the help of the school guidance counselor—every week in a five-minute loudspeaker announcement.

"So far the program has led to some really positive discussions," Hawley says. "I have noticed that the students are feeling more empowered to speak out and speak up."

Like Hawley, other teachers often elicit the help of school guidance counselors for strategies to handle social aggression. Peggy Rubens, an elementary school counselor in Seattle, Washington, started a program called Creative Crossings to help preteens and parents navigate the potholed road of adolescence. She also leads a workshop for educators and students called "We Hate Sarah: Games and Activities to Initiate the Discussion of Girls Harassing Other Girls." The workshop is usually booked well in advance, an indication that educators and parents struggle with this issue.

"One of my favorite strategies is changing the language of hate. Instead, I teach girls to use the phrase 'Connect, Disconnect, and Reconnect,'" Rubens says. "It's much less abrasive than 'hate,' and is a better description of what's really happening."

To illustrate the ups and downs of friendships, Rubens has the kids draw roller coasters, identifying the point when the ride is connected with the ground, when it's flying wildly up into the air, and when it careens downward once again. That way, the kids get a visual of their friendship patterns.

"It really hits home," Rubens says. "They'll look at the roller coasters and say, 'Wow! Somebody finally understands how this friendship feels to me.'"

DAWN: Why do you hate me?
LOLITA: Because you're ugly.
WELCOME TO THE DOLL HOUSE, 1995

Another of Rubens' activities, borrowed from *Queen Bees and Wannabes*, is called "Take The High Road," an acting activity in which students are assigned different characters and brainstorm choices each character would make to improve a bad friendship situation and choices that would make it worse. The purpose is to teach students that they have choices, but it also teaches empathy.

"When you put the characters and all their choices out on display, you can see from the other person's perspective what is really going on," says Amanda, a Seattle sixth-grader who participated in the activity with her classmates.

Rubens also has students play the "Lawyer Game," in which students plot out mean behaviors on a four-part continuum—just joking; this is mean, but she deserves it; this is mean, and nobody deserves it; and, finally, this is harassment. The students are asked to play lawyers and debate their positions convincingly—if they feel the girl deserves the mean behavior, they must prove it.

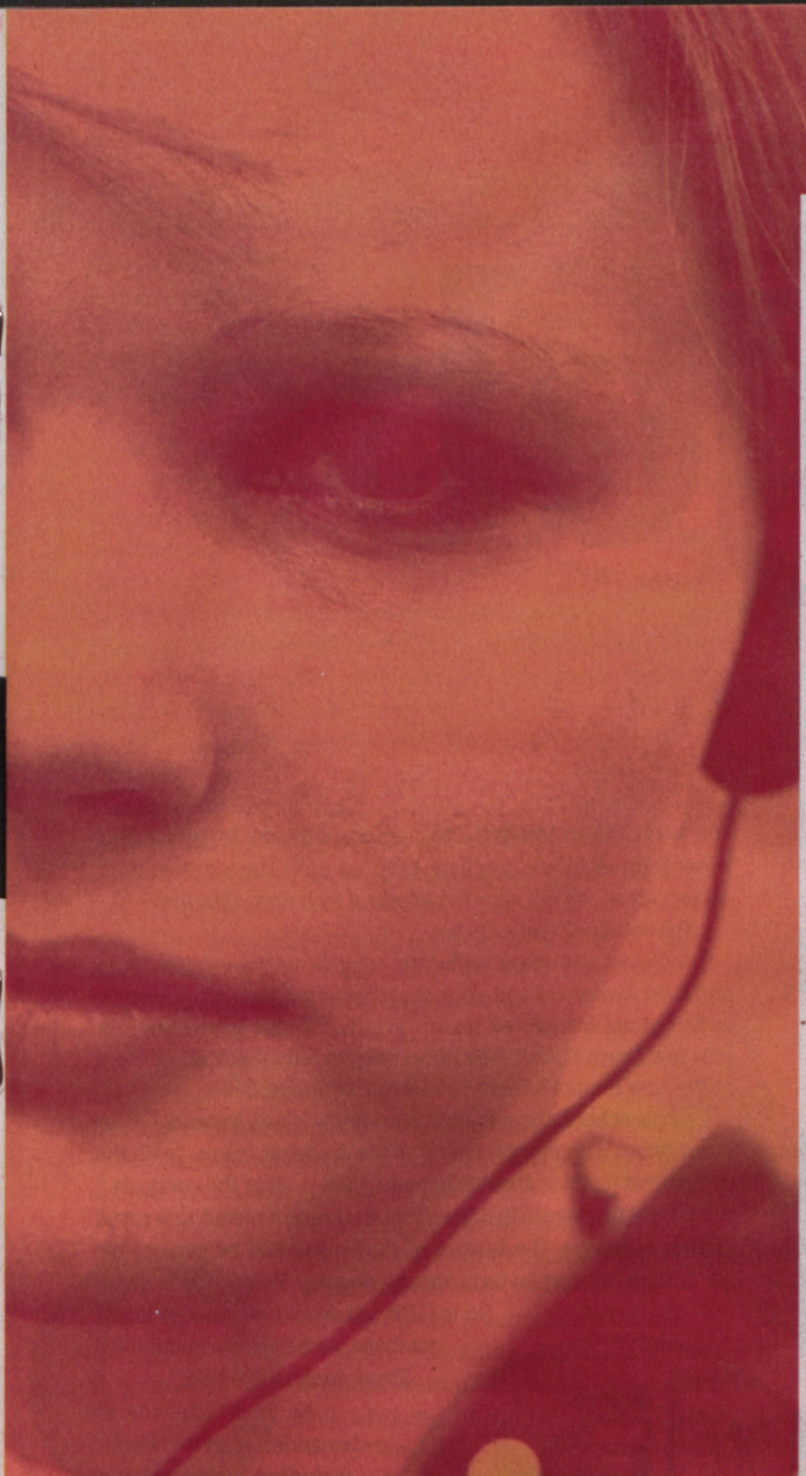
All of Rubens' activities teach girls that it's sometimes OK to get angry and engage in conflict, and that it's not uncommon or unfeminine to do so. It's one of many empowering messages she hopes to convey to other students around the country by taking her "We Hate Sarah" workshop on the road.

"Although it's much easier to spot physical aggression, social aggression is just as harmful, and if educators don't intervene, they condone the behavior, putting the healthy social development of girls at grave risk," she says.

Rubens knows this firsthand. She was the victim of social aggression as a preteen, and she remembers the pain vividly. "We didn't have a guidance counselor, and I think it would have been helpful to have someone at school to help me see the bigger picture and help ease the tension," she says.

Even today, Rubens grapples with the memory of her schoolgirl bullies. "I still, on some level, fear my friends will turn their backs on me. I've even had several dreams about it," she admits. At times, those fears enter her waking life. "One day, I arrived at work to find that someone had put colorful Easter egg cards and candies in all

PHOTO: STOCKBYTE



the teachers' boxes," she recalls. "Perhaps because I was the sole Jewish employee, my box was empty. But I found myself practically in tears—not because of the thoughtless act, but because it brought back a very old feeling that perhaps people were talking behind my back and I was being left out with a mean intention. So I guess you could say that on some level, I am haunted by the bullies of my past."

The ghosts of former schoolmate bullies likely stalk the corners of many women's memories, but educators also encounter them in the flesh in school bullies-turned-parent bullies. In her latest book, *Queen Bee Moms and Kingpin Dads,* Wiseman writes about how even the most well-adjusted and mature adults are faced with contemporary bullies. Teachers in particular, Wiseman says, are targeted by bully parents.

Educators "continually have their integrity questioned and their competence questioned," she says, "And even though teachers are so busy...they have parents demanding to speak them 'right now!' or in extreme cases, even threatening lawsuits over a concern about their child."

Wiseman devotes an entire chapter to helping parents work with teachers, but the main message is that adults must reject bullying behaviors and become positive models for their kids. If they don't, child bullies could grow up to be adult bullies.

Some victims of bullying, like Danielle from Pennsylvania, will grow up to be more cautious and less trusting adults. "I've learned that you can't trust friends, even your best friend, with all of your secrets," she says. "It's a tough situation, with always having to watch what you say and knowing that this will never stop because it happens all through life. But, maybe it's easier because then you know what's coming for you."

Danielle wants to be a guidance counselor when she grows up, so she can help other girls. "I wouldn't make the girls avoid each other, but bring them together to talk about their problems," she says. "I'd get the parents involved so they're informed, and I'd put the girls together in groups for projects so they learn to behave and are more aware of each other. They probably won't want to. But I think it can help." nea

IM, Web Sites, and Texts, Oh My!

A photo of an overweight student taken by a camera phone in a locker room circulates to her classmates. A vicious rumor about an eighth-grade girl is spread via instant messenger. A Web site devoted to poking fun of a classmate invites students to post their own "flames" about her.

With the proliferation of telecommunications, social aggression has gone high-tech, where "cyberbullies," hiding behind anonymity and leveraging the wide reach of the Internet, stalk their prey around the clock. Instead of passing notes in class or whispering secrets in the schoolyard, students use cell phones, text messages, e-mails, instant messaging, and digital cameras as tools to tease and taunt their victims from anywhere, at any time.

"In many cases, cyberbullying appears to be an extension of in-school bullying, either as a continuation or in retaliation," says Nancy Willard, executive director of the Center for Safe and Responsible Internet Use. "Cyberbullying is potentially more emotionally damaging to young people because online communications can be very vicious, the harm is ongoing, the audience vast, the bullies can be anonymous and can solicit the involvement of online 'buddies,' and many youth are afraid to tell any adult."

Along with leading to school failure and avoidance, cyberbullying has also been linked to school violence and suicide. For information on how to recognize and help stop it, visit www.neatoday.org.

PHOTO: VICKY KASALA

Hot Jobs

More popular than George Clooney. More in demand than Kelly Clarkson. These hard-to-fill specialties are the wave of the future.

BY MARY ELLEN FLANNERY AND JOHN ROSALES

Just bask in the glow for a minute. You—the reading teacher, the security guard, the physics geek—you're hot! With a growing shortage of teachers and other professionals on the horizon nationally, you should enjoy that sought-after status. As always, special education teachers, as well as math and science specialists, are among the most in demand, but so are a lot of other folks. So, who's the big man on campus now? It just might be you.

On the Road to Peace

Forty students have signed up for Karima Belemlih's Introduction to Arabic class next year—nearly twice as many as she can accept. But that's just the kind of interest that the U.S. Department of Defense wants to see. In their eyes, Belemlih is doing a heckuva job.

Less than 2 percent of American students study Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Korean, Japanese, Russian, or Chinese, all critical languages in the new world economy and political landscape. A new National Security Language Initiative, unveiled in January, aims to boost those numbers dramatically by pumping millions of dollars into teacher education and other training programs.

In the meantime, it's not easy to find an Arabic teacher. Belemlih, originally from Morocco, was hired at Suffield High School in Connecticut to teach French. Her administrators were thrilled to get a second language (without paying for a second teacher). And she was delighted to get a chance to teach her language and culture.

With its non-Western alphabet and way of writing, it's not easy. (Did you know Arabic sentences don't always need verbs?) But Belemlih knows her students appreciate the challenge, and likewise, she relishes the opportunity to show them a world beyond the nightly news. "When they see me, they don't see a stereotypical Arab person," she says.

A High-Tech Solution

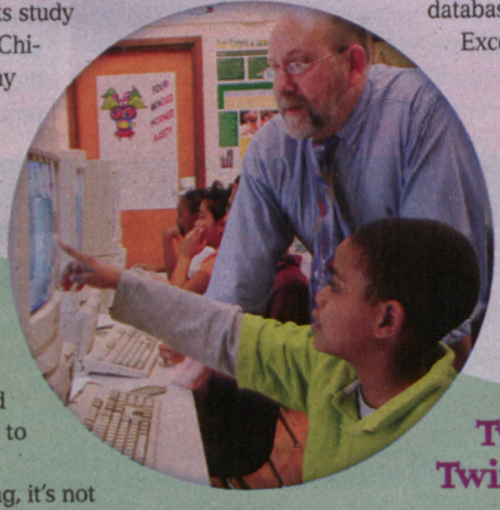
You want me to integrate technology into my lesson plans? When? How? While teachers keep up with the latest in their subject areas, it's not easy to become a tech specialist, too.

The solution? Get a Givler.

A Givler will work with you—check out your curriculum and then invite you and your students into a tech lab where an appropriate, integrated lesson awaits. "That's where the hot jobs are," says Dave Givler, who does exactly this kind of work at the Arts Impact Middle School in Columbus, Ohio.

At his school, there is no "technology" class. Instead, Givler collaborates with every member of the academic teams, "with the notion that [tech] is absolutely embedded in all of the curricula."

"Here's a possibility," he writes in a recent memo to a social studies colleague. "Each team of students would be responsible for finding out certain facts about a country. Population is good. So is GDP....It would be entered into a database, and then we could have Excel analyze the data."



As tech literacy is demanded of more people, including your students, the questions are: "How do you get meaningful technology into established schools? How do you make it work?" asks Givler. The answer: Hire somebody like him.

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

To become a great prekindergarten teacher, you need "patience, lots of patience," laughs Jacinth Gurdon, at Poinciana Elementary in Kissimmee, Florida. Plus, a knack for creating structure and a good singing voice won't hurt either.

PHOTOS LEFT: JONATHAN OLSON; RIGHT: WILL SHILLING

"You have to be that nurturing person who does all the singing—everything is a song!"

But once you've accomplished that—and fear not, 3-year-olds rank enthusiasm much more highly than tone—you'll be very popular.

As many school systems respond to testing pressure by pushing more demanding curricula into younger grades (kindergarten is the new first grade, you may have heard), and as public policy-makers realize that early education is an effective way of preventing later problems, prekindergarten programs are growing across the country.

This summer, Florida's 4-year-olds will be enrolling in vast numbers to meet that state's new universal prekindergarten initiative. Nationally, between 2002 and 2003, the number of children in state-funded preschool grew by 6 percent.

So you'll have a job, and what's more, a very rewarding one. "It just doesn't compare," says Gurdon, who previously taught fourth and fifth grades, but was urged to accept her new position by district officials. "It was the best decision I made—the growth that I've seen!"

Say What?

Diana Ogawa is retiring next year, after 36 years as a speech-language pathologist in California's public schools. Who's going to take her place?

Probably not any young pup with a nose for money. Choosing public schools over private practice doesn't make much financial sense. "When you think 'speech and language,' most people probably think public schools—but it's wide open," Ogawa says. "You could go to a hospital, nursing home, private practice...."

And often, they do. Last year, 62 percent of speech-language pathologists reported that job openings in their school district were more numerous than job seekers, according to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. In California, where Ogawa splits her time between three San Mateo County high schools, the shortage is particularly acute.

Toss in a few budget cuts over the years and Ogawa has a caseload of about 88 kids this year, far more than ideal. "There are some days when it starts the minute you walk in and just doesn't let up until you leave," she laughs. Still, with great training, she makes it work.

And it's a fantastic job, she promises. Every student offers a different challenge, and the pathology behind each problem is exciting—think *CSI!* Plus, when it comes down to it, Ogawa says, "it's all about people."

When x Equals U

With President Bush calling for 70,000 new teachers to lead Advanced Placement courses in math and science, the numbers are pretty clear.

It's that high-level math teacher, specifically the one who understands the limit of a function as it approaches a constant, who will be our next American Idol. As more students take algebra in middle school, more are signing up for college-level math in high school.

Mary Lappan, who teaches "both flavors of calculus"—that's regular and multivariable for you English majors—at New Trier High School in Winnetka, Illinois, has seen "enormous growth in AP classes."

Part of it may be the middle school algebra phenomenon, but Lappan also points to "more equity in terms of girls. You used to see girls funneled out of, or choosing not to take, high-level math. Now it's encouraged."

Lappan also predicts a need for more elementary math and science specialists. If the United States wants to be competitive, it's not good enough to have an elementary teacher who loves reading but muddles through math. Of course, the problem is, most college math or science majors can make a lot more money in private industry. And those numbers just don't add up.

Cultural Ties That Bind

Miriam Medina calls herself a "go-between"—the link between non-English-speaking families and their schools—but she might as well call herself the Go-To Queen, considering just how frequently she's called on to serve the growing Latino community in her New Jersey district.

With Latinos accounting for 40 percent of U.S. population growth between 1990 and 2000 and immigrant families making up the fastest-growing segment of the school population nationwide, Medina's work as an education support professional is highly coveted. "We need language translators at all levels—teacher, secretary, security, custodial," she says.

Medina, who is the only bilingual program and parent coordinator in Lakewood, helps translate student evaluation reports, report cards, and health reports in the district's six schools. She also helps parents communicate with housing contractors and landlords. As a recent PTA president, who conducted meetings in English and Spanish, she boosted parent involvement there, too. "As a Latina, parents are less shy with me." nea

PHOTOS TOP: PHELAN EBENHACK; BOTTOM LEFT: SEAN CONNELLEY; MIDDLE: DAVID BARNES; BOTTOM RIGHT: KIKI GEHRINGER

From Legos to Logos

Tweens and teens today know that displaying more logos than a NASCAR driver can help secure a place at the cool table at lunch. That's creating growing headaches for educators.

BY CYNTHIA KOPKOWSKI

Walk into middle and high schools these days, and the hallways double as runways. Girls in designer jeans by Seven and Lucky Brand that ring up at $140, topped by Baby Phat and Juicy Couture hooded sweatshirts costing $80 to $120. Guys in North Face and Phat Farm jackets carrying $200 price tags. Even the flip-flops can cost as much as $50 if they come from J. Crew. And that's just the clothes. Cell phones are ubiquitous, and the $300 Razr is a coveted model. Apple iPods, which cost between $100 and $300, are another thing to have—and have taken away by exasperated educators.

It's not just out in the O.C., although the television shows named for that particular stretch of California beachfront have something to do with it. Educators across the country say students' increased focus on clothes, gadgets, cars, and money is evident in their classrooms, and it's starting to cause problems. "When the fire drill rings, we just can't go very fast, because they're worried about leaving all their stuff in here," jokes Dawn Shephard-Pope, a high school business and marketing teacher in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Kidding aside, deleterious effects on learning and discipline

ILLUSTRATION: LISA HENDERLING

present problems, she says. "Some of these kids are working 25 to 30 hours a week to earn the money for all of these things, and that affects their schoolwork." Even more troubling is the mindset of students simply handed money and expensive accessories by their parents. "My concern is that they think it's normal to have a $300 iPod or a $60 a month cell phone bill and have no idea how it gets paid for," says Mike Flinchbaugh, a high school journalism teacher in Greenville, North Carolina.

In class, commercialism often translates to lack of attention to the task at hand. "The iPods, the MP3s—always plugged in and always entertained is hard to compete with," says Janet Joseph, a Miamisburg, Ohio, high school teacher. Shephard-Pope sometimes has to reprimand students browsing the county tax Web site during class, looking up the value of friends' and teachers' houses.

Then there's the problem of students showing disrespect for the authority figures they regard as out of touch—or worse, pity for being unable to afford the goods they flaunt. There is a growing chasm between students living the high life and the teachers trying to educate them, says Flinchbaugh. "We've got an assistant principal who drives a 20-year-old car, and the kids have new cars, and they notice that," he says.

"MY CONCERN is that they think it's normal to have a $300 iPod or a $60 a month cell phone bill and have no idea how it gets paid for."

—MIKE FLINCHBAUGH

There's little mystery about what's influencing tweens (the much-coveted demographic made up of 8- to 12-year-olds) and teens these days. Peers, movies, music, and the offerings from television networks such as Fox, BET, E! and MTV rule. MTV's *My Super Sweet 16* highlights outrageous teen birthday parties. No less influential is its reality show *Laguna Beach*, which serves as a type of live-action clothing and lifestyle catalog for tweens and teens nationwide, brought to life by the students at Laguna Beach High School. (More from an NEA member at that school later.)

Think this is an age-old problem just wearing a new set of designer labels? Not so, says James McNeal, a consultant and expert on marketing to kids. While children have always linked their identities to certain brands, in the last decade, "working parents turned over their kids' 'gotta haves' completely and in effect told them, 'Whatever makes you happy, you can have,'" says McNeal, a former academic who has been researching spending by and on children for decades. That attitude has given rise to a new financial hierarchy in families, with children perched at the top, he says.

Today, children ages 4 to 12 wield power over roughly $300 billion of their parents' annual spending. Advertisers are pumping the trend, too, spending more than $15 billion annually on youth marketing. It's affecting an increasingly younger crowd, McNeal says, pointing out that 2-year-olds now recognize brand logos. This past year, teacher Stephanie Johnson of Douglasville, Georgia, noticed girls discussing clothing and labels—in her first-grade classroom.

"Now, kids want their entire world defined by a specific brand," says Alissa Quart, author of *Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers*. Money and brands have "become a shorthand for them to create an image for themselves."

Some school districts are taking a stand, requiring uniforms and drafting rigid policies governing the use of cell phones and digital media players. Those that require uniforms tout reduced peer pressure and economic division among students.

Even without such policies in place, educators who've gone head-to-head with the fashionistas and gizmo fans advise their peers not to panic if students pay more attention to the latest *InStyle* than their French Revolution handouts. They suggest turning the commercial craze into teachable moments.

Talk with students about creating a budget to reinforce math skills, or use luxury and discount clothing store ad campaigns to illustrate concepts like class stratification. If students are reading *The Grapes of Wrath*, transition the discussion of Depression-era poverty to the present. In Des Moines, Iowa, high school teacher Stefanie Rosenberg-Cortes confronts the issue directly, talking to her students about the influence of media and marketing.

But take heart. Even at Laguna Beach High—the school turned reality-show set—what the students wear doesn't eclipse what they're learning, says theater teacher Mark Dressler. "When we see abject materialism," he says, "it's from students in other parts of the country who want to have the kind of fortunate lifestyle that these kids do."

Dawn Shephard-Pope, a high school teacher in Raleigh, North Carolina, sees a growing influence of brand names and products on her students.

Finally, laugh a little at the label mania, says Shephard-Pope, who jokingly warns her students that she'll confiscate their expensive goodies because she can't afford them herself.

"Ultimately, you can't let it bother you, because there's a sense that it's all a little ridiculous," she says. "And it's not going away." nea

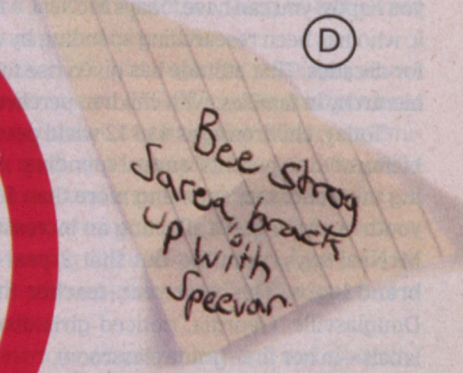
PHOTO: JERRY WOLFORD

'That's Mine Now!'

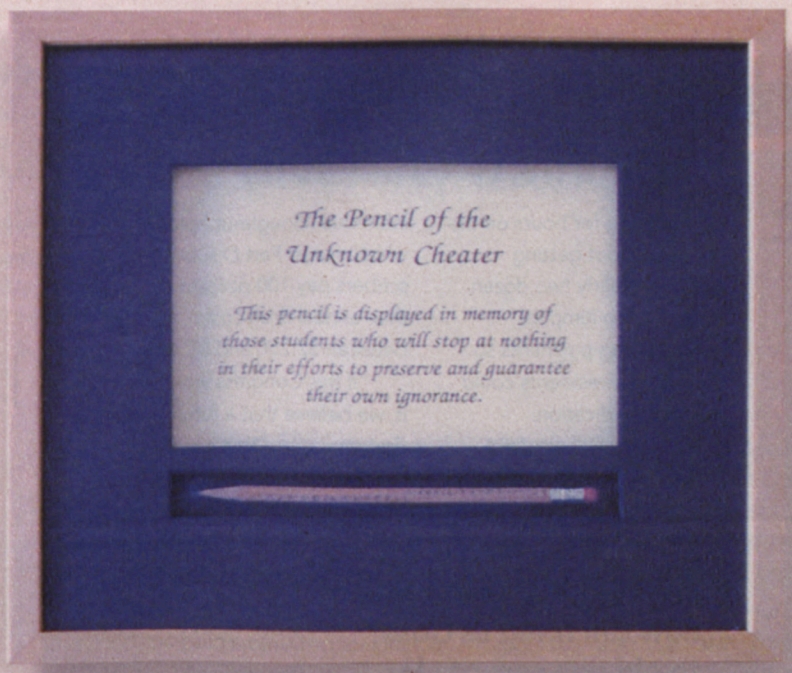
The three words that still a student's heart. ("Ma'am, don't take it! Oh, please, no, don't read it!") Over the years, you've gathered enough treasures to turn Blackbeard green—including more than a few electronic noisemakers, funny "balloons," funnier cigarettes, tiny cars, playing cards, and other distractions. They fill Friday boxes, if you're nice, or end-of-the-year drawers, if you're not. (Does anybody really keep these goodies forever? No, bigger people don't have the right to just take stuff, says Norfolk, Virginia, teacher Janet Hellman.) Of course, some of you, as a point of principle, never have uttered the dreaded words. ("A gross abuse of power," one teacher chided.) But for those who have temporarily confiscated an item or two, check out this drawer of keepsakes.

—MARY ELLEN FLANNERY

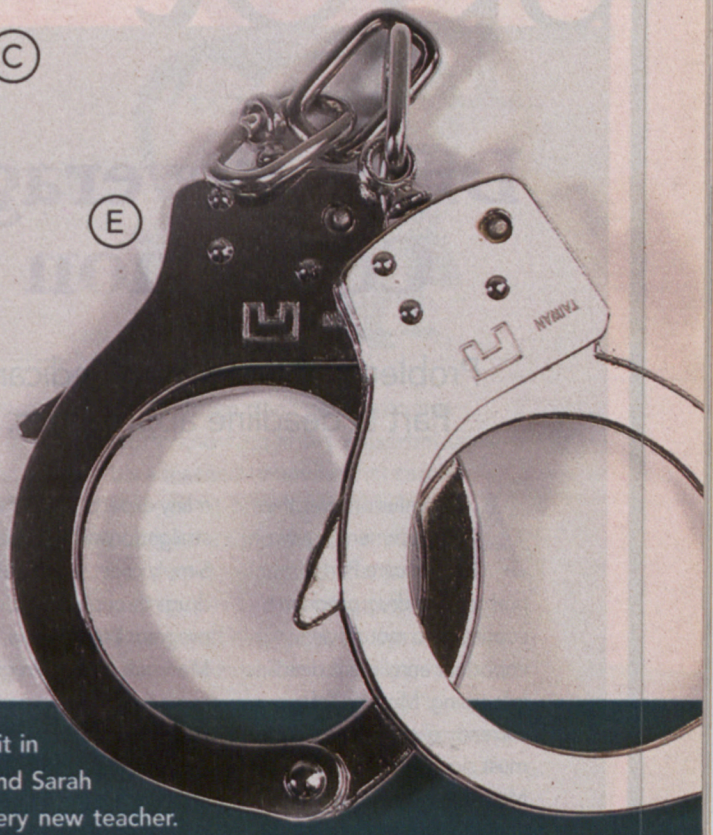
A) BOTTLE OF MEN'S COLOGNE. "The 6-year-old...thought he was being very sneaky....But we were soon all choking from the heavy fragrance!"—Janet K. Hellman, Norfolk, Virginia. B) BOXER SHORTS. After a pair was found on a media center table, "My first thought was, 'Did he go home with no underwear on?'" recalls Esther Peck of Manalapan, New Jersey. "We couldn't ask the students if someone had lost their drawers; that would be too embarrassing." C) THE PENCIL OF THE UNKNOWN CHEATER. Nearly 15 years ago, a student in Jim Kraft's social studies class in Wausau, Wisconsin, came into a study session with little studying on his mind. Instead, he copied down the questions to an upcoming multiple-choice exam, and then carved the answers into this pencil. When Kraft found it, he framed it. "It's a chuckle for students and parents...but also teaches a none-too-subtle lesson," he says. D) LOVE NOTE. Translation: "Be strong Sarah, break up with Stephen." Amy Benoit, a third-grade teacher in Worcester,



ALL PHOTOS: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.; EXCEPT FOR PENCIL PHOTO: JIM KRAFT; ROOSTER AND OWL: GETTY IMAGES


The Pencil of the
Unknown Cheater
This pencil is displayed in memory of those students who will stop at nothing in their efforts to preserve and guarantee their own ignorance.

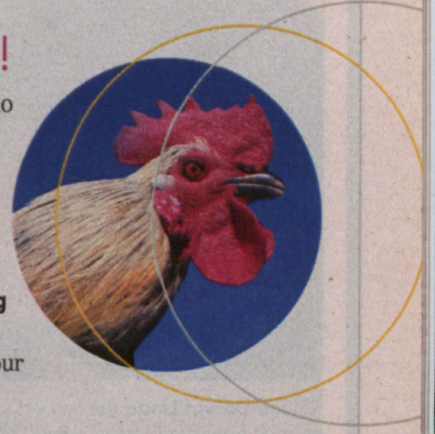
C



E

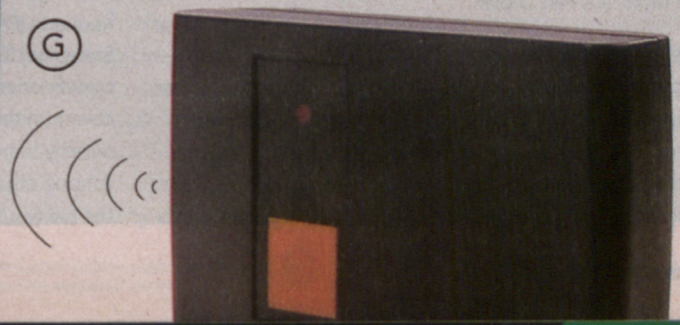
Massachusetts, took this note from two very embarrassed girls (and keeps it in her drawer for when she needs a laugh.) They did learn to spell better. And Sarah did "break up" with Stephen. E) HANDCUFFS. One fourth-grader. One very new teacher. One set of handcuffs. It all adds up to one crazy story from Vicki Ables in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. "Before I knew it, he had one of the handcuffs clicked on me....I was panicking, and the students were all giggling. Then who walks in? The principal! I thought, 'That's it, I'm a goner,' [but] she turned at the door and very nonchalantly said, 'You'll learn.'" F) SMALL DEAD OWL. "'Give me the owl now!' I said, and he reached into his pocket and slapped it into my hand. Cringing on the inside, I retreated to my classroom, popped it into a plastic bag and into the freezer....It was a saw-whet owl, about 6 inches in length and full grown." — Ellen Simone, Enfield, Maine. G) ELECTRONIC NOISEMAKER. Hmm...Just what exactly is this black box? Ffffrrrpt! Oh dear. Don Rock, a sixth-grade teacher (of course!) in Silverdale, Washington, took the remote-controlled device away from a student last year. He recalls, "It so closely mimicked the passing of gas that I could not suppress a smile." (We'll take his word on that!)

Cock-a-Doodle-Doo!



We've heard of a teacher who confiscated a live rooster in his classroom. (Rooster Man, is this true?) We'd love to hear his story, as well as yours. What squawked, crunched, or crumpled in your hands? Go to **www.neatoday.org** to see an audio slideshow with more confiscated booty and share one of your own stories.

G



Drug Coverage Confusion

Problems abound as a Medicare Part D deadline approaches.

As confusion over the government's new Medicare Part D prescription drug program continues to mount, an important enrollment deadline is looming: Most people currently eligible for Medicare must sign up for Part D by May 15—or wait until the fall and pay a permanent late penalty on their premiums.

That hard-to-understand penalty clause is just one example of the complex, even bizarre provisions of this law.

Retiree **Darvin Lindquist** has yet to see any savings from the Medicare Part D plan.

It didn't have to be that way. When Congress was considering covering prescription drugs through Medicare, many experts suggested a straightforward approach: Simply cover prescription drugs through the Medicare program itself. That is, have Medicare pay for drugs the same way it now pays for doctors and hospital care.

But that solution clashed with Washington's current passion for handing over public programs to private companies. So the law that finally passed, by the narrowest of margins, forces seniors to buy private insurance if they want to take part. There are dozens of drug plans on the market, varying from place to place, with different premiums, different lists of drugs covered, even different sets of pharmacies—and these plans can change their drug lists at any moment.

During the program's start-up in January, computer problems were so bad that many low-income seniors and disabled people, whom the new law shifted from Medicaid to Medicare for their drug coverage, disappeared from databases. When these people tried to get essential prescriptions filled, pharmacists couldn't confirm they had coverage. Druggists were waiting for hours on the phone without getting answers. Nearly two dozen states had to jump in, guaranteeing payments so their elderly residents could get vital medication.

In North Dakota, NEA retiree Darvin Lindquist signed up for a Part D plan and has been paying premiums since January, but he has yet to see any savings. He says the insurer tells him they're backed up but should get everything straightened out soon. If they don't, he'll drop the plan: "There's no sense in paying for something I'm not getting," he notes.

"TIME AND MONEY invested in political action now can bring us closer to old-age security for everyone." —NEA HEALTH CARE ANALYST CAROL MALONE

With diabetes and arthritis, Lindquist needs expensive drugs, so he and his wife drive 70 miles to Canada to buy them, often at half the cost of U.S. medications.

NEA opposed this new drug program when Congress was debating it in 2003, pointing to its huge gaps in coverage and private industry subsidies, says NEA health care analyst Carol Malone. NEA supports a bill just introduced by Senators Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) to allow beneficiaries to get drug coverage the simple way, directly from Medicare. Among other improvements, the bill would eliminate the infamous "doughnut hole," which makes Part D subscribers pay 100 percent of their annual drug costs between $2,250 and $5,100.

"If this Congress won't do it, we believe that a future Congress—one that's more interested in being generous to seniors than to insurance and drug companies—will turn Medicare Part D into a program that can really provide security for older Americans," says Malone.

With all of Medicare Part D's problems, she says, candidates running for Congress this year will be under pressure to take a clear position on what they would do about senior drug coverage. She suggests checking out the candidates running in your area, and supporting those who stand for simple and inexpensive drug coverage. "Time and money invested in political action now can bring us closer to old-age security for everyone," she says.

For now, many NEA retirees already have better drug insurance from their school districts, but for some NEA retirees who lack prescription drug coverage, Plan D, with all its faults, is still worth buying, says Malone.

If you or your elderly relatives are debating what to do about Part D, Malone recommends visiting the reader-friendly Web site of the Medicare Rights Center, www.medicarerights.org/drughelp.html.

—ALAIN JEHLEN

PHOTO: NANCY KUEHN

Should teachers be required to take diversity training?

YES

Looking around my education classes at Michigan State University, I often see only White, female students. In fact, it's the highest demographic of teachers anywhere. Students need to know that their teachers respect and accept them, not only on an individual level, but also as members of society. If they don't see themselves in their teachers, students want to know that at least they're understood.

All educators will, no matter where they work, teach students from different backgrounds than their own, whether they are from a different social class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or level of physical ability. Diversity training can help educators relate more effectively to students who are different from themselves.

In one of my very first classes at MSU, I was able to mentor a young kindergartner, whom I will call Jack. A young African-American student, Jack was unaware of the connotations of race, but he immediately noticed the difference between his own skin color and mine. I didn't ignore his comments, but rather chose to use the occasion as an opportunity to help him understand that there are many different types of people in the world. I feel this was important for me to do because, as an African-American male, Jack will soon grow up to realize that race has many real consequences in life. Ignoring that fact would have been a disservice to both of us.

Children don't come into this world knowing how to discriminate—it's a learned behavior that can be stopped or prevented. Kids spend many hours in schools, and if they can be in an environment that breaks stereotypes and creates unity through diversity, it can continue the progress of social justice for our next generation of children.

MARY CARTIER is a Student member at Michigan State University. She is a junior studying Secondary Spanish Education with a minor in Teaching Speakers of Other Languages.

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

Should teachers be required to take diversity training?
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

Should all children attend preschool?
The tally on the question in the last *NEA Today*: 44% Yes 56% No

Should technology be used in every classroom? If you'd like to take part in this future Debate, send a brief note to Cindy Long, **clong@nea.org**.

NO

Of course, every September a faculty does need a "heads-up" session on the year's group of kids, of their homelife, their homeland, and needs. The same holds true when there is an influx of students in the middle of the year, as happened after Hurricane Katrina. These sessions are necessary tools, but quite different from required diversity trainings.

Too much in-service for employed teachers can be so demeaning, dumbed down, and even insulting, that required diversity training for all teachers would merely push the scale farther and infuriate the ones most needing some enlightenment. And it is a fallacy to assume that only the traditional "majority" members could use some enlightenment. Prejudice and downright ignorance is colorblind. We reflect our backgrounds, our families, our religions, and our communities.

Additionally, at least half of the people now teaching have entered the profession in the past five years, all earning credentials which have specified, in most states, a least one course or strand in meeting the needs of a culturally diverse student population. The experienced faculty have, for the most part, been "in-serviced" almost annually in various sensitivities of their community. For San Diego, that included everything from language variations for native African-American kids, to practices of Hmong families, to ways to involve differently-abled kids in field trips, to how it is that our Muslim girls can become track stars while wearing head coverings and workout sweats.

As futile as it is to teach ethics to politicians who already know right from wrong, it is folly to believe a few mandated diversity meetings can fundamentally change classroom behavior. Teachers already recognize that their students are very diverse but must eventually achieve similar success.

SUZANNE EMERY is a Retired member who taught English and journalism in San Diego City Schools.

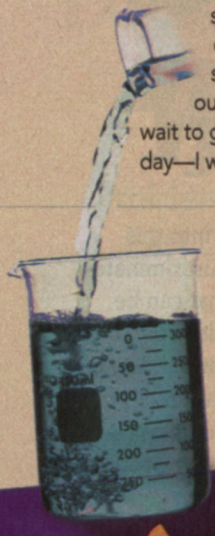
ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

Love Letters

IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU'RE DOING AN AWESOME JOB . . .

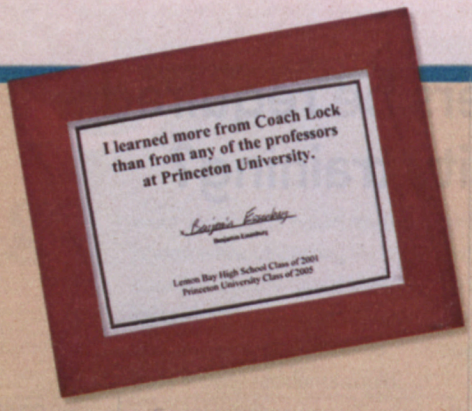
We asked you to share the best thing a student has ever said to you, and your response was so overwhelming, we offer your students' moving tributes as an end-of-school year homage to educators everywhere.

Touching Tributes



I WAS TEACHING an archaeological science unit and, at the end of the day on a Friday, one of my students stopped at the door on the way out and said, "Mr. Du Mez, I can't wait to get to your science class on Monday—I want the weekend to go real fast!"

DUANE DU MEZ
Oostburg, Wisconsin


I learned more from Coach Lock
than from any of the professors
at Princeton University.
Lennox Boy High School Class of 2001
Princeton University Class of 2005

ONE OF MY FORMER physics and chemistry students was the first student from our high school to be accepted to Princeton University. This past August, after Ben had graduated, he and I got together for lunch. We talked for nearly two hours, and when we left the restaurant, Ben said he had something for me in his car. I was awed when he gave this plaque to me and still am. Many students say nice things to me, but this tribute Ben gave me is both wonderful and humbling.

FRANK LOCK
Englewood, Florida

AT THE END of the school day, a little boy in my class came up to me and said, "Oh, Miss Gilson! I wish we could stay in school for another three hours!" I laughed and thanked him.

CINDY GILSON
New Hartford, Connecticut

TWO YEARS AGO, a former student of mine (whom I'm proud to call a friend now) asked me to stand up for

Tough Love

WHEN ASKED A QUESTION a student can answer by looking around the room (time, date, assignment, page number, or whatever), I say, "I don't know. I'd have to turn around and look, and I'm too busy/lazy/old to turn around." If asked how to spell a word, I reply, "I don't know. How do you think it's spelled?" and lead the student to come up with the answer. I must have said "I don't know" too often for Stephanie, who said, "Ms. Bartlett, I don't know how the state of North Carolina ever let you be a teacher. You don't know anything!" Jerry agreed, "Yeah, you always act dumb to make us smart," to which John added, "Hey, you know, that's pretty smart!"

ELSIE BARTLETT
Sixth-grade language arts teacher
Valdese, North Carolina

THE BEST THING a student ever said to me was, "Thank you for failing me. I didn't realize how important physical education was until you cared enough to fail me. Now I participate and am more concerned about my health." She had called me to say she had passed physical education with high grades at her new school. She told me my failing grade made her take another look at the importance of the subject I teach and showed her that I care about her life.

HOLLY JO SENSENICH
Hope Mills, North Carolina

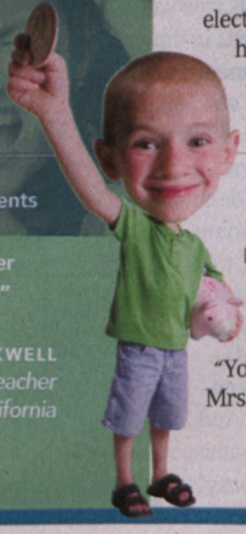
"I HATE YOU!" one of my students said to me indignantly. "Why?" I asked, rolling my eyes, used to her antics. "You made me like to read!" Just doin' my job.

LISA BLACKWELL
High school English teacher
Los Angeles, California

Comedy Central

IN A NOTE at the end of the year, Alex wrote these words to me: "I had heard you were a mean witch, but to my surprisement, I have found out that you are a nice witch." He then proceeded to take my elective, Creative Writing, this year. I have taught for 35 years, and this is my favorite compliment for so many reasons.

EMILY FARRELL
English teacher
Wallingford, Pennsylvania



LAST YEAR ONE of my second-grade boys gave me a quarter. When I asked him why he was giving me money, he said, "You're the best teacher I ever had, Mrs. Snyder, so I'm giving you a tip!"

CHERYL SNYDER
New Cumberland, Pennsylvania

BEAKER PHOTO: RUBBERBALL; PLAQUE PHOTO: COURTESY OF FRANK LOCK; "TOUGH LOVE" PHOTOS TOP TO BOTTOM: RICHARD LEWISOHN, RICHARD LEWISOHN, PHOTODISC; BOY WITH COIN: PHOTODISC; WITCH ILLUSTRATION: PHOTODISC PALMA COLLECTION

her wedding. I thought Tara was joking, but she said she wanted me to do this because I meant so much to her. Can you imagine how much I was bursting with joy and pride? A bridesmaid at my age! As I marched down the aisle on that beautiful day, I could hear people whisper, "She's the teacher, she's the teacher!" Tara is now happily married. As for me, I doubt that anything in my career will ever bring me that much delight or pride... but you never know!

RENEÉ FREEMOND-WOODS
Buffalo Grove, Illinois

AS A SPEECH-LANGUAGE pathologist in an elementary school, I've heard a ton of hilarious quotes from my kids:

"Not all people wear underwear, not grownups; they wear thongs."

"Your perfume smells like lettuce." (It was grapefruit lotion.)

"Will you marry me? Just a joke. You look like you're scared out of your brain."

"You are wasting my time in speech. I'm sorry. It is almost Halloween and I have to practice doing tricks."

"I got my brain worked by her again" (referring to me, his speech pathologist).

"Did you miss me yesterday? I had a broken day yesterday."

"Your mom looks younger than you!"

"You need to take those eyebrows off, you have too much."

"My sister threw my homework in the trash can and my dad put macaroni on it."

"Are you married? You have to get married, you know. You should get a husband. Just find one."

MELISSA DE MAYO
Cypress, California

Heart 2 Heart

I'VE TAUGHT for over 25 years, and I still have a hard time saying good-bye the last day of class. Last year, Sarah made a lovely card for me that said: "I will miss you incredibly much. The year went so fast. Every cloud is full of tears that will fall when I leave you. Then you won't see me crying. Your student and family member, Sarah." Of the many wonderful letters I've received in my career, this one is the most poetic, and poignant, of them all.

FELICIA ARNOLD
Third-grade teacher
Vernon, New Jersey

I WAS TEACHING sixth- to eighth-graders who had "problems" in the conventional school. One day, a student who was in my class because of chronic fighting announced, "I finally figured it out. When I'm nice to people, they're nice back." From that point on, we never had a problem from him. He even joined the academic Olympic team and the cross-country team. With that one student, California taxpayers got a good return on my entire career's salary.

KEN GREENSPAN
Three Rivers, California

I TAUGHT SCHOOL for 33 years, and now I substitute because I enjoy children and know good substitutes are appreciated. Recently a fourth-grader said to me, "You're a real teacher." Isn't that about the best thing someone could say to a substitute?

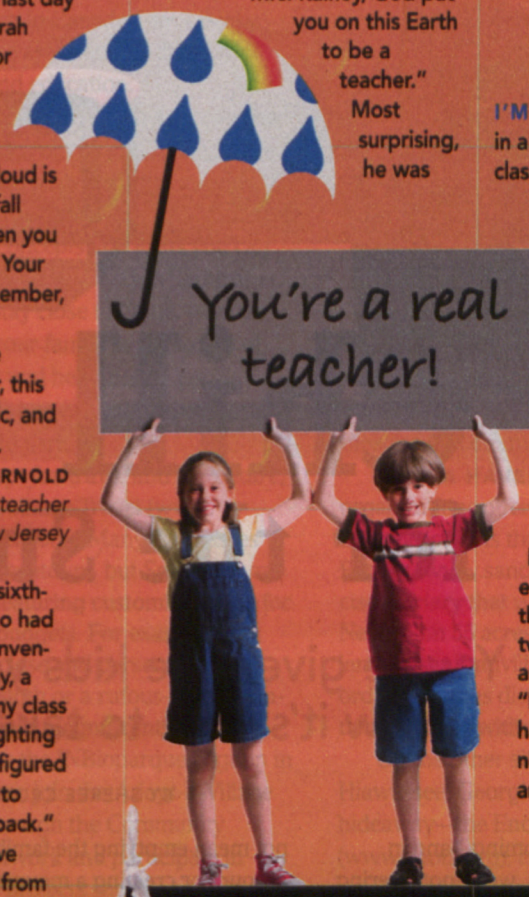
CAROLYN BARNETT CREGER
Casper, Wyoming

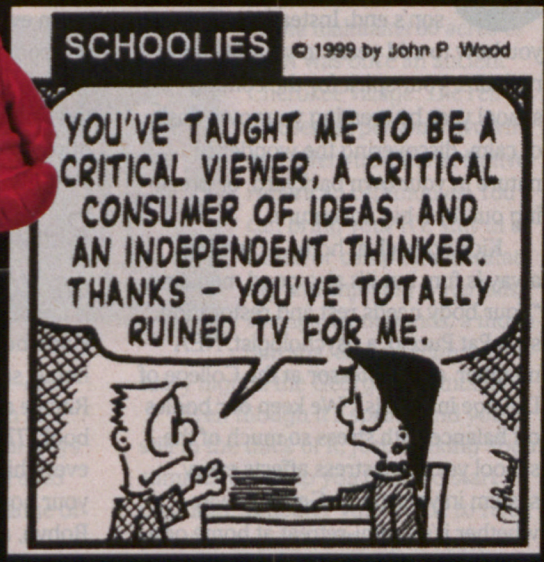
FOR TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK, I have students write notes to teachers who have influenced them. One note I received sticks in my mind: "Mrs. Rainey, God put you on this Earth to be a teacher." Most surprising, he was one of those silent kids I didn't even know I had reached! Sometimes, when I'm having a bad day, I try to live up to what Don believed to be true.

SUZANNE RAINEY
Language arts
Fenton, Montana

I'M A PARAPROFESSIONAL in a high school special needs classroom, and one of our most severe students has no language skills and does not easily show affection. One of her goals was to sit in a chair for a certain amount of time. When she did get up, there would be a struggle to get her to sit down again. One day, she spontaneously got up and hugged me. Then she properly sat back down. This was the first hug we had seen in two years. The class was amazed and the teacher said, "Look at that!" Everything I had worked toward in my nine years in the schools was answered in that one hug.

TERRI CURRIER
Wareham, Massachusetts




SCHOOLIES
© 1999 by John P. Wood
YOU'VE TAUGHT ME TO BE A CRITICAL VIEWER, A CRITICAL CONSUMER OF IDEAS, AND AN INDEPENDENT THINKER. THANKS - YOU'VE TOTALLY RUINED TV FOR ME.

WEDDING PHOTO: COURTESY OF R. FREEMOND-WOODS; RAINDROPS ILLUSTRATION: IGOR KOPELNITSKY; KIDS WITH SIGN: PHOTODISC; BOXING GLOVES: PHOTODISC

Chill Out for the Summer

You've given the kids your all this year. Now it's time to take care of you.

BY SHEREE CRUTE

Summer's coming—and in celebration, we're not uttering another word about diet, disease, or fitness until season's end. Instead, we'll show you how to add years to your life and revitalize your spirit for the coming school year by creating your own oasis of calm, discovering the wonder of nature in your own backyard, or breaking out for a big adventure.

Kicking back at home or getting away is fun, but it's also good medicine. "Your body needs rest and restoration," says Pat Puccio, a psychologist, NEA member, and professor at the College of DuPage in Illinois. "We keep our bodies off balance with stress so much of the school year, and stress affects every system in your body. Getting away—whether it's a mini-retreat at home or a long trip—helps restore that balance."

Best of all, spending the summer adding joy and comfort to your life does not mean emptying the family savings account or creating a mountain of debt. By using the ingenuity and creativity that teachers put to good use in the classroom every day, you can enhance your environment or explore the world on your own terms. Here are a few innovative, inexpensive ways to make the best of your time off.

Recharge in a Room of Your Own

Happiness begins in a comfy, nurturing home, say home design experts Dawn Ritchie and Kathyrn Robyn. In their book, *The Emotional House*, they tell you everything you need to know to give your home "the ahhh factor." Ritchie, Robyn, and architect Anthony Poon say that anyone can spend a little bit of their summer creating a room, or even a corner, where they can re-energize and banish stress. Work with these basics:

FOLLOW THE LIGHT. "Select a spot with natural lighting. If you relax in the morning, choose the east side of your home; for the evening, choose the west," says Poon, a Los Angeles-based architect who has created yoga studios and other relaxing spaces in homes and schools.

CONSIDER THE VIEW. "Can you see trees, a garden, a view that would calm you?" Poon asks. If you don't have a lush, green back yard, consider planting a windowbox or small windowsill herb garden to enhance a drab or stark landscape. Window treatments or stained glass window art can help, too.

WORK THE FINISHES. That's design-speak for paint, fabric, flooring, and color. "Don't use too much contrast and consider warm, rich woods," Robyn says. "Earth tones are warming and calming; reds and yellows can be invigorating. Greens and blues are also calming, but cooling as well." You don't have

PHOTO: COLORBLIND

to paint an entire room—you can do a corner, a wall, or create a curtain of color by dropping fabric from the ceiling.

SIT PRETTY. "Pick seating with good lumbar [lower back] support," says Ritchie. Try your chair on; don't just look." Women must make a special effort, Robyn cautions, as most furniture is scaled to fit male bodies.

SOOTHE WITH SOUND. "You can muffle sound inexpensively with fabric wall covering, especially those with foam backing," Poon says. You can also make a beautiful barrier of your own, Robyn and Ritchie advise. Find a tall, narrow table or broad plant stand about the same height as your head when you're sitting. Set one large, full- foliage plant on each side, and place a small bubbling fountain (they cost less than $20) in the middle. "It's a natural visual and sound barrier," Robyn says.

Embark on a Great Adventure

"Stress adds up," Puccio says. "Getting away subtracts from that." Whether you and the family hike the local state park or embark on the adventure of a lifetime, "you'll be removing time pressures and soaking up sights and sounds to draw on in tougher times." To begin with, try biking or getting back to the land.

CYCLE AWAY STRESS AND STRAIN. Bicycling is not only fun, it's a healthy way to see your town, state, or the entire country at a speed any family member, at just about any fitness level, can enjoy. The Adventure Cycling Association (www.adventurecycling.org), a 30-year-old, not-for-profit organization, can help you plan an inexpensive but exciting local excursion or create the trip of your dreams. "We can guide you as you bike the Louis and Clark trail or bike from Mexico to Canada," says Becky Douglas, the association's director of outreach and education.

GIVE SOMETHING BACK. Authentic ecotourism offers a unique opportunity to have a potentially life-altering journey, conserve the environment, and, learn new concepts and ideas you can share with your students in September.

If you stay close to home, you can introduce your family to the basics of ecotourism and help make a positive impact on the environment in your own local or state park.

If you opt for travel and adventure, check out Solimar Travel (www.solimartravel.com). Many companies offer costly ecotours, but Solimar is one of the few featuring customized trips for a range of budgets. For example, you can get up close and personal with a three-toed sloth or a rufous-tailed hummingbird amid magnificent tropical orchids near the INBioparque Lagoon in Costa Rica, or join the Adopt-a-Village program through the Community Tourism Network and participate in community projects such as teaching, farming, or building.

Renew Your Spirit from Within

The route to spiritual reflection is different for everyone, but all paths—prayer, meditation, or simply being alone with your thoughts—can lead to a rediscovery of the joy in life. Check these easy and economical ways to find a little inner peace, or log onto www.spiritsite.com for a wide range of options.

USE YOUR PERSONAL SANCTUARY. Begin your spiritual journey by retreating to that special room you created or by going on a nearby retreat with your family and friends. Contact your own church, temple, mosque, or community organization.

FIND A HAVEN. Many types of organizations offer retreats. One of the most peaceful is the San Damiano Retreat (www.sandamiano.org), a Franciscan friary that welcomes all faiths. Nestled on 55 acres of beautiful woodland hills in Danville, California, the order promises distraction-free reflection—with or without spiritual direction.

On the other side of the country in Hiawassee, Georgia, is a different type of hideaway—the Enota Mountain Retreat (www.enota.org), run by a non-religious, not-for-profit conservation organization. Surrounded by 750,000 acres of Appalachian mountain forest, Enota maintains 60 acres of what was once an ancient Cherokee village. The retreat focuses on personal growth and offers traditional Native American ceremonies. You can bring your RV, stay in a cabin, or camp out, meditating and enjoying waterfalls, springs, trout ponds, a mountain spa, and an animal sanctuary high in the Georgia Mountains.

Even though it's spring and you're still in the thick of it, just thinking about summer can help you chill. So start planning. Whether you decide to relax at home or explore the open road, choose a summer activity that does double duty—recharging your body by restoring your spirit. nea

PHOTOS FROM TOP: DIGITAL VISION, HANS HUBER, CAROLINE WOODHAM

The 2006 NEA Representative Assembly

This July, more than 9,000 NEA members elected by their state and local colleagues will gather in Orlando, Florida, for the annual NEA Representative Assembly (RA), July 2–5. The RA is the Association's highest decision-making body. Delegates will be voting on the proposed amendments listed below, as well as electing the NEA Secretary-Treasurer and two members of the Executive Committee. You can find day-to-day coverage of RA debates and action by going online to www.nea.org.

NOTE: Proposed insertions of language are underscored; proposed deletions are shown in [ ].

Proposed Amendments to the NEA Standing Rules, Constitution, and Bylaws for vote by the 2006 Representative Assembly.

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To add a section titled "Background and Clarification" to the NEA new business item submission form.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate

Completion of a Background and Clarification section will be required of the maker of the motion for a new business item which references a lawsuit, statute, previous new business item, or other matter that may not be adequately understood by the delegates without further explanation. A section titled Background and Clarification will be part of the new business item form and any printed materials provided to delegates, allowing for a brief explanation of the item(s) referenced.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would add a section titled "Background and Clarification" to the new business item submission form. The maker of a new business item would be required, as appropriate, to explain briefly in this section any non-self-evident references in the new business item to a lawsuit, a statute, a previous new business item, or other matter. If a question arises as to whether completion of a Background and Clarification section is required with regard to any particular new business item, the decision will be made by the Committee.

Contact Person: Carol Keasler, Illinois

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 2

TITLE: To require that delegates seeking recognition for points of information no longer take precedence over speakers for or against an item that is being debated.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate

During debate on any item before the Representative Assembly, points of information shall be taken in the order received along with speakers for or against an issue and shall not be considered precedential.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would change the rules governing debate on business before the Representative Assembly. Under the amendment, delegates seeking recognition for points of information no longer would take precedence over delegates seeking to speak for or against an item that is being debated. Standing Rule 6.B specifies that debate at the Representative Assembly not otherwise specifically governed by the NEA Constitution, Bylaws, or Standing Rules be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.* The current practice of giving precedence to delegates with points of information is consistent with *Robert's.*

Contact Person: Karen Russell, California

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 3

TITLE: To eliminate the requirement that resolutions that have been set aside for separate consideration and new resolutions submitted from the floor be voted on en masse.

Rule 10. Definition of Resolutions, Committee, and Procedure

F. Procedures for Submitting Resolutions

(seventh paragraph)

At the request of any delegate, a proposed resolution shall be separately considered for the purpose of discussion or amendment. [Following consideration of such designated resolutions, the Representative Assembly shall vote en masse upon the resolutions as amended.]

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Paragraph three of Standing Rule 10.F requires that resolutions that are set aside for separate consideration and any new resolutions submitted from the floor be voted on en masse. This amendment would eliminate that requirement. If adopted, resolutions that are set aside for separate consideration and any new resolutions submitted from the floor could be voted on individually or en masse.

Contact Person: Brent McKim, Kentucky

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To insert the term "public" before the first use of the term "education" in the Preamble to the NEA Constitution.

Preamble

We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, in order that the Association may serve as the national voice for public education, advance the cause of education for all individuals, promote the health and welfare of children and/or students, promote professional excellence among educators, gain recognition of the basic importance of the teacher in the learning process and other employees in the educational effort, protect the rights of educational employees and advance their interests and welfare, secure professional autonomy, unite educational employees for effective citizenship, promote and protect human and civil rights, and obtain for its members the benefits of an independent, united education profession, do hereby adopt this Constitution.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would insert the term "public" before the first use of the term "education" in the Preamble to the NEA Constitution. Although the terms "education," "educators," "educational effort," etc. are used elsewhere in the Preamble, they are not similarly modified by this amendment. A similar amendment was defeated by the Representative Assembly in 2001 and an identical amendment was defeated in 2000.

Contact Person: Paul Phillips, Massachusetts

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 2

TITLE: To allow the NEA Bylaws to provide NEA membership for persons who are not education employees.

Article II. Membership

Section 2. Membership Eligibility: Provisions and Limitations

a. Membership, as provided in the Bylaws, shall be open to persons engaged in the profession of teaching or in other educational work and to persons interested in advancing the cause of public education, who shall agree to subscribe to the goals and objectives of the Association and to abide by its Constitution and Bylaws.

IMPACT STATEMENT:
This amendment would allow the NEA Bylaws to provide NEA membership for persons who are not education employees.

An associate NEA membership category open to persons who were not education employees existed until the 1993-94 membership year when, at the recommendation of the Organizational Streamlining Committee, Article II, Section 2(a), of the NEA Constitution and NEA Bylaw 2-1 were amended to eliminate the category.

Contact: NEA Board of Directors

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 3

TITLE: To change the term "Classroom teachers in higher education" to "Active members employed in higher education faculty and professional positions."

Article V. Board of Directors
Section 1. Composition

e. [Classroom teachers] Active members employed in higher education faculty and professional positions shall be represented on the Board at least in proportion to their membership in the Association. If the percentage of [classroom teachers in higher education] such members elected to the Board of Directors fails to achieve such proportional representation, the Representative Assembly shall elect at large the number required to assure such representation. Candidates for these positions shall be nominated by the delegates at the Representative Assembly who are [classroom teachers] Active members employed in higher education faculty and professional positions.

IMPACT STATEMENT:
This amendment would change the term "Classroom teachers in higher education" to "Active members employed in higher education faculty and professional positions." This change would expand the group of higher education employees who are eligible for the special governance rights on the NEA Board of Directors that are now given only to "classroom teachers in higher education." The use of the term "professional positions" in the amendment does not include Education Support Professionals in higher education.

Contact Person: Ruth Horie, Hawaii

BYLAW AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To establish an NEA membership category for persons who are interested in advancing the cause of public education, but are not eligible for any other membership category.

Bylaw 2. Membership
2-1. Categories

a. There shall be seven (7) [six (6)] categories of membership in the Association: Active, Student, Retired, Substitute, Reserve, Associate, and Staff.

(new)

g. Associate membership shall be open to any person who is interested in advancing the cause of public education but who is not eligible for any other Association membership category. Associate members shall be eligible to receive such benefits and services authorized by the Board of Directors.

(subsequent sections are renumbered)

2-7. Membership Dues

(new)

l. Dues of Associate members shall be established by the Board of Directors.

(subsequent sections are renumbered)

IMPACT STATEMENT:
This amendment would establish an NEA Associate membership category for persons who are interested in advancing the cause of public education, but are not eligible for any other membership category. The dues of Associate members and their services and benefits would be determined by the NEA Board of Directors. NEA had this type of Associate membership category through the 1992-93 membership year, when the category was eliminated at the recommendation of the Organizational Streamlining Committee, but the dues and benefits and services were set forth in the NEA Bylaws.

Contact: NEA Board of Directors

Candidates Running for Office

Candidate for Secretary-Treasurer

LILY ESKELSEN

I loved my work with students; as a state association president; as president of my pension fund; and as Secretary-Treasurer of the NEA. And all for the same reason: I love being where I can make a difference in something I think is important.

As individuals, we make a difference in the lives of the students. But we maximize our individual power when millions come together in an organization that cannot be ignored.

NEA budgets dollars for fixing the absurdities of No Child Left Untested; dollars for advocating for compensation so that talented people can afford to work in education; dollars to challenge costly privatization and tax giveaways to corporations that devastate local economies and school funding.

The strength of millions makes a difference.

Candidates for NEA Executive Committee (Two Positions)

CAROLYN CROWDER

The right of all students to attend great public schools is being threatened by an organized and well-funded group who want to privatize and dismantle a multibillion dollar public sector industry for their own economic gain.

The NEA can be the most effective deterrent to public education's enemies. Now, more than ever, we need engaged, motivated members and strong, experienced leadership.

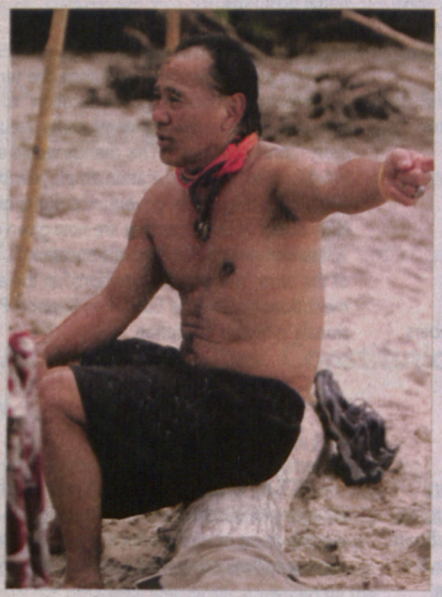
MARK CEBULSKI

As we enter the 150th anniversary year of this great organization, we should stand proud of what we have accomplished, while also remaining undaunted at the challenges we have before us. Those challenges are enormous, for the "public" in public education is increasingly at stake.

Above all, I believe we must continue to utilize this Association as the best vehicle from which to say the positive things that are happening in our public schools and the countless contributions made by our members. The NEA should stand prepared to support our state affiliates so that each can fulfill its goals of maximizing compensation and working conditions for each member, great public schools everywhere in America, and the advancement of human and civil rights.

He Will (Try To) Survive

Rattlesnakes? 220-mile runs? That's nothing for Bruce Kanegai, who has been outwitting, outlasting, and outplaying on CBS' hit show.



THIRTY-NINE TRIPS to the emergency room and appearances on television shows titled *Worst Case Scenario* and *It's a Miracle* should have proven that Bruce Kanegai, 58, is a survivor. But he recently set out to claim that exact title on the popular reality show, *Survivor: Panama—Exile Island.*

Aside from his numerous brushes with death (including a bite from a four-and-a-half-foot rattlesnake), Kanegai has also survived the classroom for the past 34 years as a visual arts teacher at Simi Valley High School in California. As a student, "I didn't enjoy high school and I thought education should be more enjoyable and inspiring," Kanegai says. "I thought I could do better and touch young people's lives."

Armed with a black belt, Kanegai has instructed more than 7,000 students in the art of karate, and he is writing a book about American Shotokan Karate. He's set the record for running the 220-mile John Muir Trail from Mount Whitney to Yosemite National Park.

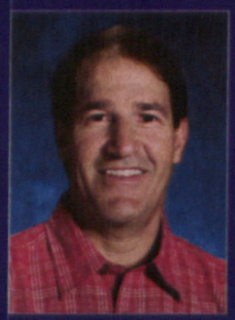
Throughout his childhood, "I was no athlete," Kanegai says. "I was always the smallest person in my class [and] the last one picked." High school friend Steve Becker calls him "a giant man packed into a little guy's body. He's got this warrior spirit." Although he is the oldest participant on *Survivor* this season, his physical condition and competitive spirit made him a contender.

No word by the time this went to press if Kanegai had been exiled or was in it for the long haul. And his CBS contract keeps him mum on his Panama adventure. But he did hint that he has a secret weapon: the support of his wife, also a teacher, who's endured all 39 emergency room trips since they met 28 years ago.

—CAITLIN HICKEY

Climb Every Mountain

Colorado teacher Matt Tredway heads to the top of the world and plans to do a little research while he's there.



EVER WISH YOU COULD get away from it all? This month, Tredway, a Steamboat Springs High School science and math teacher, will take a leave of absence and mount an intense vertical journey up the south face of Mt. Everest in Nepal—a climb of 29,035 feet. (And you thought your stack of assessment tests was high.)

Tredway began climbing as a boy. By the time he was in high school, he had scaled many of Colorado's highest peaks. In the early 1980s, he became an instructor, specializing in climbing, backpacking, and winter mountaineering. Tredway translated his enthusiasm for climbing into teaching outside of the classroom, too, founding and directing Everything Outdoors Steamboat, an outdoor education and recreation program.

After a roughly 23-hour flight to Kathmandu, Tredway and the five other members of his team will begin a week-long hike to Mt. Everest's base camp. They plan to make various climbs and descents to base camp at first. Then, May 8–13, they'll attempt one of the most coveted climbing goals among extreme athletes: Mt. Everest's summit. Hypoxia and unpredictable weather—common impediments to extreme altitude climbing—will be constant worries.

While on the mountain, Tredway and his teammates will research the effects of high altitude on the blood, in collaboration with the University of Alabama School of Medicine. They are also using the climb to raise money for the American Lung Association.

Follow along with Tredway and his team, as they plan to share written and audio dispatches and photos from the Mt. Everest climb, at www.neatoday.org. —JEANNE BEYER

PHOTOS TOP: MONTY BRINTON/CBS COPYRIGHT 2006 CBS BROADCASTING INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED;
BOTTOM: COURTESY OF MATT TREDWAY

Back for the Future

Mark Armato of Missouri brings history to life for his audiences one costume change at a time.

ON AN ORDINARY DAY, Armato heads into his eighth-grade social studies class, takes roll, and begins the lesson. But on special days he doesn't show up to class at all. A substitute in an oversized buckle belt, jacket, and wide-brimmed cowboy hat evocative of the 1800s does. Jesse James, the infamous outlaw, is taking over for the period. "I understand folks can't make up their minds about me," says James, and for the next half-hour a different teacher and a different history class are under way.

Armato is a 26-year veteran of the Maple Park Middle School in Kansas City, Missouri. When he's not teaching history, he's acting it out, at school and in the community.

An advertisement calling for Civil War re-enactors first drew his interest in the 1970s. "[I've] always been a history buff," Armato says, before confessing, "I guess I'd be what you call a Civil War nerd." He's amassed a period clothing and memorabilia collection worth thousands. Civil War photographer Matthew Brady, abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, and Revolutionary War hero Paul Revere are among his most popular roles. It's not just about the clothes, either; Armato uses historically accurate speeches and motivations to breathe life into the figures.

Would he like to live in the past? "I'd really like to visit but not to live," says Armato. "I enjoy modern life."

—ALAN McCOMBS

Digital Grandma, Version 6.6

Iowa retiree Susan Wakefield can talk technology and teach it to her peers, too.

SUSAN WAKEFIELD IS NOT the kind of senior citizen who has to ask her grandchildren for help programming her VCR. In fact, she teaches people how to use far more sophisticated equipment.

The 66-year-old Wakefield (below at right), first became interested in video and television production toward the end of her career as an elementary language arts teacher.

"I'd had some experience videotaping classroom lessons, and I learned that a local cable company could provide the equipment and training so we could make and broadcast student productions," says Wakefield, a member of the NEA/ISEA-Retired Program. She pursued the idea and quickly caught the video bug—earning money in retirement by videotaping weddings and producing a professional video on warehouse safety.

Three years ago, Wakefield got involved with the Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center, which operates its own TV studio, Senior Center TV. Assisted by graduate students from the University of Iowa, volunteers learn every aspect of television production and create their own programs, which air on local cable and cover everything from studio interviews to videotaped shows of the senior center's band and choir. Sometimes Wakefield does the teaching.

"I love the variety of work," says Wakefield. "Most of all, I love watching our TV staff volunteers active in something that allows them to age creatively."

—MATT SIMON

GOT A TIP?

Do you have an interesting story idea? Contact Cynthia Kopkowski, section editor, at **ckopkowski@nea.org**.

PHOTO TOP: ROB GRANTHAM/VINCENT PHOTOGRAPHY; BOTTOM: MARK TADE/GAZETTE COMMUNICATIONS

A report from NEA Secretary-Treasurer Lily Eskelsen

Lily Eskelsen

As NEA Secretary-Treasurer, I am pleased to report to you figures taken from NEA's audited financial statements for the fiscal and membership year ended August 31, 2005. Once again NEA experienced a positive year in 2004–05.

Our membership increased by an additional 33,176 members this year, and our General Operating Fund Unrestricted Net Assets increased by $2,387,050 as a result of net revenues exceeding expenses (Consolidated Net Assets increased by $7,939,971). The increase of Net Assets and continuous growth of new members add strength to our already fiscally sound organization that will enable us to build confidence in public education and to advocate for our members' needs. Each of you should be proud of your contribution in making the NEA strong and responsive to the students we serve and the people who spend their lives in public education.

The auditors' opinion letter stated that their work was performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. It is a "clean opinion" issued without any qualifying comments. An unqualified opinion is the best kind of opinion letter to receive.

The Consolidated Statements of Financial Position presents the Association's assets, liabilities, and net assets as of August 31, 2005. One important indicator of an organization's financial strength is the Net Assets (the difference between total assets and total liabilities). Net Assets should be a positive balance and sufficient not only to stabilize an organization in troubled times, but also to serve as a source of funds for special projects, future growth, and other fiscal demands as deemed appropriate. NEA's consolidated Net Asset Balance is now over $106.1 million. In addition, NEA has continuously demonstrated a positive Current Ratio, which means that NEA is in a solid position to meet its current obligations by using cash and other current assets.

The General Operating Fund Statement of Activity and Changes in Net Assets reflects total Revenue and Expenses by Strategic Priorities for years 2005 and 2004.

Membership growth, fiscal stability and strength, and sound allocation of NEA's resources combined to make 2004–05 an outstanding year for the National Education Association.

The chart on the opposite page shows a breakdown of how the $140.00 Active Professional and $78.50 Active ESP NEA dues dollars for 2005-06 are allocated to support and represent members and affiliates in their efforts to achieve the mission of NEA.

NOTE: A complete copy of the NEA audit report is available upon request.

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

Consolidated Statements of Financial Position By Fund at August 31, 2005, with comparative totals as of August 31, 2004

	General Operating Fund	Special Purpose Funds	Capital Improvement Fund	Consolidating Entries	2005 Total Funds	2004 Total Funds
Current Assets	$ 87,199,647	$ 30,004,754	$ 2,048,145	$ (6,039,841)	$ 113,212,705	$ 91,139,182
Long-term Assets	18,523,475	12,806,853	45,272,827	(5,233,165)	71,369,990	76,664,992
Total Assets	$ 105,723,122	$ 42,811,607	$ 47,320,972	$ (11,273,006)	$ 184,582,695	$ 167,804,174
Current Liabilities	$ 37,192,485	$ 5,157,970	$ 3,582,147	$ (6,039,841)	$ 39,892,761	$ 27,758,203
Long-term Liabilities	4,740,642	12,429,862	21,335,138		38,505,642	41,801,650
Total Liabilities	$ 41,933,127	$ 17,587,832	$ 24,917,285	$ (6,039,841)	$ 78,398,403	$ 69,559,853
Unrestricted Net Assets						
Undesignated Net Assets	45,101,157	25,223,775	22,403,687	(5,233,165)	87,495,454	70,968,321
Net Assets Designated for Postretirement Benefits	18,688,838				18,688,838	27,276,000
Total Unrestricted Net Assets	63,789,995	25,223,775	22,403,687	(5,233,165)	106,184,292	98,244,321
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	$ 105,723,122	$ 42,811,607	$ 47,320,972	$ (11,273,006)	$ 184,582,695	$ 167,804,174

Your 2005-2006 Dues Dollars

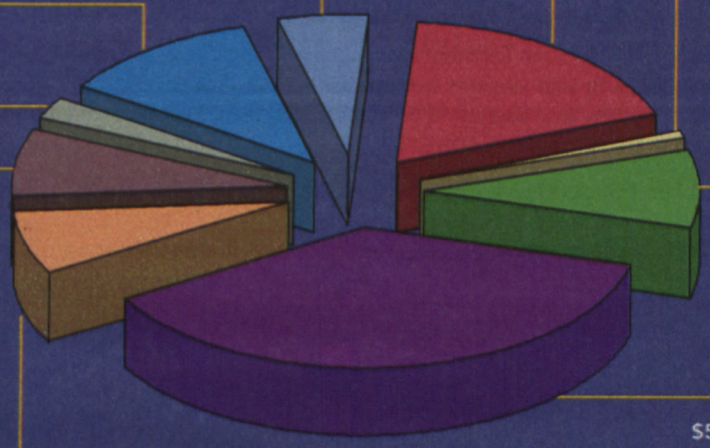
$7.28 ($4.08 ESP)
Governance
Implement an inclusive, engaged governance process that fosters member participation and democratic decision-making through such avenues as the Representative Assembly, NEA Board, NEA Executive Committee, and NEA committees and task forces.

$25.90 ($14.52 ESP)
Administrative Support
Provide a facility that includes technology infrastructure, financial services, facilities services, and human resources to serve the needs of affiliates and members.

$1.19 ($0.67 ESP)
Contingency
Provide funding for emergencies at the national, state, or local levels.

$12.13 ($6.80 ESP)
Improve Teaching & Learning
Advocate for qualified teachers and support professionals in every classroom and worksite; provide strategies for school improvement and raise student achievement through early childhood education, teacher preparation, certification and development, and research and documentation on testing and accountability.

$16.76 ($9.40 ESP)
Legal Support
Implement advocacy programs for members including the Unified Legal Services Program, Fidelity Bond, Association Leaders liability insurance, and a one million dollar member liability insurance program.



$52.76 ($29.58 ESP)
Support Strong States & Locals To Protect Member Interests
Support the UniServ program, affiliate project and assistance grants, bargaining training, and activities related to research on and improving members' salary and benefits, and compensation database technology. Recruit, retain, and engage members in all categories and produce communications for members and leaders.

$3.36 ($1.88 ESP)
Leadership Development and Constituency Support
Provide for Regional Leadership Conferences, Minority and Women's Leadership Training, support for councils including NCUEA, ESP, Higher Education, NEA-Retired, and the NEA Student Program.

$10.44 ($5.86 ESP)
Legislative and Ballot Initiative Action
Build bipartisan support for public education that includes lobbying, government relations, a state ballot initiative and legislative crises fund, cyber lobbyists, members' education, and mobilization on political issues.

$10.18 ($5.71 ESP)
Partnerships and Public Relations
Establish new partnerships with diverse supportive organizations and businesses and outreach to family-community organizations and to minority communities. Establish NEA's public image as an advocate for great public schools through TV, radio, print, and cyber news.

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

General Operating Fund — Comparative Statement of Activity and Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended August 31, 2005 and 2004

	2005	2004
Total Revenue	$ 288,855,229	$ 280,081,851
Expenses by Strategic Priorities:		
Student Achievement — Provide students with the skills and knowledge to function successfully in school	5,420,397	4,709,855
Teacher Quality — Ensure a qualified teacher in every classroom	5,158,185	5,504,289
Education Support Professional Quality — Ensuring qualified education support professionals in the classroom and at worksites	4,146,051	3,710,088
Quality School Systems — Build learning environments that support student success	5,953,205	6,859,297
Public, Parental, and Business Support — Promote stronger public, parental, and business support for public education	42,081,440	41,407,090
Membership and Affiliate Support — Mobilize at the local, state, and national levels for the resources basic to quality schools	135,130,154	132,223,142
Administrative Services and Program Support — Provide the administrative and programmatic support vital to the achievement of NEA's goals	88,578,747	84,645,392
Total Unrestricted Expenses	286,468,179	279,059,153
Changes in Net Assets from Operating Activities	2,387,050	1,022,698
Unrestricted Net Assets, Beginning of Year	61,402,945	60,380,249
Unrestricted Net Assets, End of Year	$ 63,789,995	$ 61,402,947

To receive a grant, your idea doesn't have to be earthshaking, but it should rock your students' world.

Stephen Birmingham, Jim Christopher and Grace Konopacki, teachers in Wheeling, Illinois, had a great idea to help students learn through music. The NEA Foundation gave them funding to make it happen. Your idea could be grant worthy, too. Visit us online to learn more. Applications are now being accepted for the June 1st deadline.

THE NEA FOUNDATION

www.neafoundation.org
202.822.7840

A Special Thank You

To Supporters of the NEA Hurricane Relief

nea NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Great Public Schools for Every Child

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Audobon Community School ■ Banks Classified Employees ■ B-Line Express Inc. ■ Burnet Hill Home & School Association ■ California Casualty Indemnity Exchange ■ Cambrian District Teachers Association ■ Camden County Council of Education Associations ■ Carol Stream Education Association ■ Chilton Education Association ■ Chula Vista Educators ■ Clymer Central School Clymer Education Association ■ Coleman Education Association ■ CT Education Association ■ Dallas Education Association ■ Dayton Education Association ■ Defiance Elementary School ■ Delaware State Education Association ■ Desert Sands Teachers Association ■ DeSoto Teachers Association ■ Douglas County Education Council ■ Dyersburg Education Association ■ Eastern York School District ■ Education Associations FCU ■ Elementary School Teachers of Toronto ■ Fort Lee Board of Education ■ Illinois Education Association, Region 66 ■ Illinois Education Association, Region Council 34 ■ Jenks Classroom Teachers ■ Johnson Creek Education Association ■ Lake Oswego Education Association ■ Lawndale Teachers Association ■ Marshfield Teachers Association ■ McMinnville Education Association ■ Moorestown Education Association ■ National Health Administrators ■ NC Foundation for Public School Children ■ NE Ohio Education Association ■ NEA - in mem of Wm Bender ■ New Jersey Education Association ■ Radnor Township Education Association ■ Red Clay Consolidated School District ■ Robertson County Education Association ■ San Leandro Teachers Association ■ St. Croix Education Association ■ West Central Education ■ West Elementary-Crystal Lake ■ West Suburban Council

HURRICANE RELIEF

resources

53 **Grants & Awards** A math mentoring program brings actuaries into the classroom.
55 **The Heartbreak of Hair Loss** Helping students cope.
57 **Take Note** May 9 is National Teacher Day—remember your favorite instructor with a free electronic greeting card.
57 **Respect for All** Check out our resources for teaching students about tolerance and living in a diverse world.
59 **On TV** An entire discipline devoted to one athlete! Learn about the unique physiology of a multiple Tour de France winner and legend in *The Science of Lance Armstrong.*
61 **Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits** You *do* have gap insurance, don't you?
61 **Diversity Calendar** May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.
62 **On the Web** Listen to Ray Charles and other people of vision talk about their life and times at the National Visionary Leadership Project.

Deadline Approaching for The NEA Foundation's June Grant Review

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY JUNE 1, 2006, FOR BOTH INNOVATION AND LEARNING & LEADERSHIP GRANTS. Recipients will be notified by November 15, 2006. Grants fund activities for 12 months from the award date.

THE NEA FOUNDATION
www.neafoundation.org

Innovation Grants and *Learning & Leadership Grants* are available for all subjects, including the arts, literacy, mathematics, science, and technology. Grant amounts are $5,000 for *Innovation Grants* and either $2,000 (individual) or $5,000 (group) for *Learning & Leadership Grants.*

Through the years, The NEA Foundation has funded over 1,500 grants nationwide to NEA members. Read about recent projects at the Foundation's Web site, and submit your own idea! Practicing K–12 public school teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff are all encouraged to apply. Applying for a grant is easy—why wait?

Visit **www.neafoundation.org** today for more information, including guidelines and an application. Or call 202-822-7840.

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER

The National Weather Association offers Sol Hirsch Education Fund grants of $500 each to teachers in grades K–12 to improve the education of their students in meteorology. Selected teachers may use the funds to take an accredited course in atmospheric sciences, attend a relevant workshop or conference, or purchase scientific materials or equipment for the classroom.

Applications are due by **August 1 each year** and consist of a NWA cover form and a two-page proposal. For more information and application materials, go to **ww.www.nwas.org/solhirsch.html**, call **434-296-9966**, or send an e-mail to **NatWeaAsoc@aol.com**.

MAKING MATH FUN, ACTUALLY

Believing that interaction with real-world mentors can boost student interest and achievement in math, the Actuarial Foundation awards its "Advancing Student Achievement" (ASA) grants to schools and groups with underserved populations in grades 4–12 that are willing to develop mentoring programs bringing together actuaries, educators, and students.

The Foundation can provide a local network of actuaries who are ready to participate, as well as suggestions on how to integrate math concepts from the workplace into the classroom.

Applicants will be given wide latitude in designing programs that enhance learning and create a love of math in each student.

Preference is given to innovative programs that satisfy the unique opportunities and needs present in a local community and do not replicate existing grant programs. Funding is for two years with evaluations conducted yearly.

There is no deadline for application, but you should complete an application at least one or two months prior to the anticipated start date. For more information, go to **www.actuarialfoundation.org/grant/**.

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

The tom joyner Foundation

Get prepared at one of these 7 campuses:

Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA
Bowie State University, Bowie, MD
Jackson State University, Jackson, MS
Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, NC
Cheyney State University, Cheyney, PA
Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN
Harris-Stowe State College, St. Louis, MO

NEA & Tom Joyner Foundation

Hey Teachers—Get Certified!

$700,000 Scholarship Program

The Foundation and the National Education Association believe that pre-K through 12 curriculum should be taught by licensed teachers. We recognize that in certain urban, suburban, and rural communities not every teacher is licensed. In an effort to help teachers become fully licensed, the Foundation and NEA have agreed to join forces to assist teachers who desire to gain full licensure.

The Foundation and NEA are offering financial assistance in the following areas:

- Tuition for specified courses
- Books
- Support for preparing to take a state teacher licensure examination

nea
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
nea.org
Great Public Schools for Every Child

To be eligible for this program you must be currently employed as a teacher in a K-12 public school, or currently enrolled in an accredited school of education and have completed course work for licensure. Scholarship winners must commit to teach a minimum of three years in identified communities, to be locally determined.

Scholarships will be made through Historically Black Colleges and Universities in selected areas throughout the United States. If you are interested in participating in this program, please go to **www.nea.org/joyner** and fill out the attached short questionnaire, and we will determine your eligibility and an appropriate local HBCU for you to work through.

www.nea.org/joyner

Take Note

Indoor Air Quality Classroom Activity Helps Kids Learn About Their Schools

The indoor or "built" environment is every bit as fascinating and complex as the outdoor environment, and since we spend 90 percent of our day indoors, the quality of the air is crucial to our health, well-being, and productivity.

The NEA Health Information Network is offering an illustrated guide on indoor air quality (IAQ) in schools. Designed to be used by K–12 students and teachers, the guide supplements the Environmental Protection Agency's *IAQ Tools for Schools* program.

Using this guide, students and teachers can explore their schools and recognize architectural and mechanical features, as well as maintenance procedures that can contribute to good or poor IAQ.

They will learn how occupant behavior and people's typical activities can dramatically affect the quality of air inside buildings. With their own art and photography, students can create an "owners manual" for their indoor environment by customizing the guide to include their school building's features and typical activities.

To download the guide, visit www.neahealthinfo.org/programs/environmental/. For more information about EPA's *IAQ Tools for Schools* program, visit www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/toolkit.html.

The Heartbreak of Hair Loss

Children, Adults, and Alopecia Areata

NEA member Denise Armstrong of Nevada knows what it's like to endure stares and whispers. She suffers from alopecia areata—an unpredictable autoimmune skin disease resulting in the loss of hair on the scalp and elsewhere on the body.

In alopecia areata (al-oh-PEE-shah air-ee-AH-tah), the affected hair follicles are mistakenly attacked by a person's own immune system. The condition usually starts with one or more small, round bald patches on the scalp and can progress to total scalp hair loss (alopecia totalis) or complete body hair loss (alopecia universalis). Alopecia can also be caused by fungal infections, trauma, or as a side effect of some medical conditions (like hypothyroidism) or their treatments (such as chemotherapy for childhood cancers).

The disease affects approximately 1.7 percent of the overall population, including more than 5 million people in the United States. It occurs in males and females of all ages, but onset usually happens during childhood, making life at school psychologically traumatic for those who suffer from it.

Children with alopecia or other conditions that can cause hair loss, such as lupus or multiple chemical sensitivities, are especially vulnerable to loss of self-esteem and are often ridiculed and bullied for their appearance or limitations, which can trigger inappropriate behavior or depression. As Denise Armstrong (shown at left) reminds us, "It takes strength to walk in these shoes."

Thankfully, there is a network of support for those diagnosed with alopecia. The National Alopecia Areata Foundation coordinates online support networks for children, teens, and parents. These can be accessed by visiting **www.naaf.org**.

If you meet a child who suffers from alopecia, Armstrong urges you to "educate yourself and see what you can do to assist that child. Help them to bring their inner beauty out."

For more information on alopecia, lupus, or multiple chemical sensitivity, visit **www.neahin.org**.

NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST PLAN
2004 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT
(Trust Plan Year Beginning September 1, 2004)

The following is the summary annual report for the NEA Members Insurance Trust® Plan (Trust), Employer Identification Number 52-1126682, including information for NEA Life Insurance® Program, NEA Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance Program, NEA DUES-TAB®, and NEA MemberCare® Medicare Supplement Program for period beginning September 1, 2004, and ending August 31, 2005. The annual report has been filed with the Internal Revenue Service, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

BASIC NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The value of Trust assets, after subtracting liabilities of the Trust was $102,107,421 as of August 31, 2005, compared to $90,722,967 as of September 1, 2004. During the Trust year, the Trust experienced an increase in its net assets of $11,384,454. This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of Trust assets; that is, the difference between the value of the Trust assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the Trust year, the Trust had total income of $93,070,519 including participant contributions of $75,348,593, realized gain of $12,514,641 from the sale of assets, and earnings from investments of $5,207,285. Trust expenses were $81,686,065. These expenses included benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries, administrative and other expenses.

INFORMATION FOR NEA LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with Minnesota Life Insurance Company to pay all NEA Preferred Term Life Insurance claims and The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all other NEA Life Insurance claims incurred under the terms of this program. The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2004, and ending August 31, 2005, were $38,451,577.

Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 2005, the contributions made under such "experienced-rated" contract were $38,451,577 and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was $33,841,370.

INFORMATION FOR NEA ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT (AD&D) PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA AD&D claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The total contributions for the Trust year beginning September 1, 2004, and ending August 31, 2005 were $2,341,341.

Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 2005, the contributions made under such "experienced-rated" contract were $2,341,341 and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was $2,178,701.

INFORMATION FOR NEA DUES-TAB PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA DUES-TAB claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The NEA DUES-TAB program is self-supporting and paid by premiums from the NEA Members Insurance Trust funds rather than from Member contributions. The total contributions for the Trust year beginning September 1, 2004 and ending August 31, 2005 were $2,908,066.

Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 2005, the contributions made were $2,908,066 and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was $2,226,683. Benefits charged, less benefit claims paid, were $403,873 which is comprised of incurred but unreported claims and a pooled claim charge. Trust expenses, less benefit claims paid, were $81,107 in premium taxes and $187,086 in other expenses.

INFORMATION FOR NEA MEMBERCARE SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2004, and ending August 31, 2005, were $11,968,029. The total number of participants was 7,265.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As a participant, you have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof for a reasonable charge or you may inspect the Annual Report without charge at the office of NEA Members Insurance Trust, Attn: NEA Member Benefits, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20056 or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. You also have the right to receive from the Trust Administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the Trust and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the Trust and accompanying notes, or both. The Administrator will state the charge, if any, of the specific document you request so you can find out the cost before ordering.

NEA Members Insurance Trust

Safety Alert: The Dangers of Halide Light Bulbs

The Food and Drug Administration has issued a warning to alert schools and other indoor, all-purpose facilities about the potential dangers of high-intensity metal halide and mercury vapor lighting. The warning was issued following an incident that occurred in an Oregon elementary school gymnasium that resulted in the injury of several NEA members.

When broken, this type of lighting emits ultraviolet radiation resulting in eye and skin injuries. School employees are encouraged to find out what type of lighting is used in their school, and if the school is taking necessary precautions to prevent accidental exposure. To learn more, visit www.neahealthinfo.org/programs/environmental/halide/.

May 9—National Teacher Day

As part of Teacher Appreciation Week (the first full week in May), thousands of communities across the country will take time out on Tuesday, May 9, to honor local educators and acknowledge the invaluable contributions they make to our lives.

While it takes many people for a school to succeed, National Teacher Day focuses on the teachers who work to make public schools great places for students. We especially dedicate this day to teachers who are serving in the U.S. armed forces.

Find resources to help you celebrate this event at www.nea.org/teacherday. You'll also find ways to support teachers at www.teacherscount.org, including a feature that allows you to send free Hallmark e-cards to your favorite educators.

NEA Report Challenges Myth of Overachieving Asian Students

In conjunction with Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, NEA announces the publication of a timely resource for educators and advocates of AAPI students. *A Report on the Status of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Education: Beyond the 'Model Minority' Stereotype* describes the diversity among AAPI students and their academic achievement; the racism they experience; the challenges of creating policies and classroom practices that address their needs; and recommendations and resources for action.

This groundbreaking report challenges the myth that all AAPI students are succeeding in schools, and offers disturbing data on the widespread underachievement of some groups, notably Southeast Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. Visit www.nea.org/teachexperience/api05.html to download this report.

Teaching Respect for All

As educators, you know that dealing with intolerance in the classroom can be difficult, and yet essential, considering the proliferation of offensive images that still assault students in popular culture.

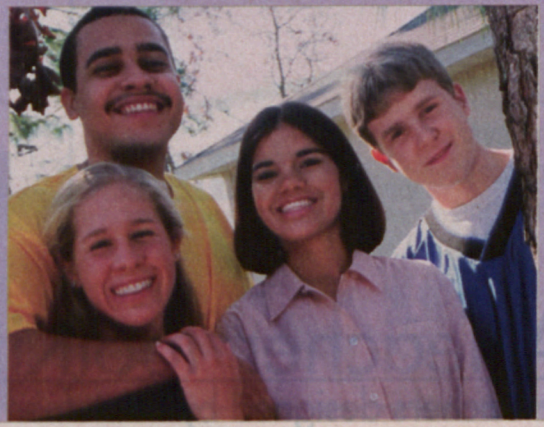
Consider the Mexican postage stamp issued in 2005, depicting an exaggerated Black cartoon character called Memín Pinguín. While NEA and civil rights leaders condemned the stamp, some said it was a traditional, beloved character.

Many resources exist for educators hoping to teach respect—addressing race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and more. Here are a few:

THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE is a leader in resources on anti-Semitism, including the well-known "A World of Difference" curriculum. Visit **www.adl.org**.

EDCHANGE, a Minnesota-based partnership dedicated to multiculturalism and diversity, offers free stuff for teachers, including an archive of social justice speeches, at **www.edchange.org**.

EDUCATORS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY has an online teacher center at **www.esrnational.org**, which includes a great lesson on helping middle school students deal with racial stereotyping, plus new resources on responding to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.



TEACHING TOLERANCE, a Web project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, provides educators with free, award-winning educational materials that promote respect for differences and appreciation of diversity in the classroom and beyond. Visit them at **www.teachingtolerance.org**.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION at **www.nameorg.org** has resources—5,000 free lesson plans!—plus free curriculum and links to other sources.

THE RESPECT FOR ALL PROJECT, which features films about bullying and gay issues, is at **www.womedia.org/respectforall.htm**. Other resources on similar topics can be found at **www.glsen.org** (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network.)

NEA has many resources of its own. Check out our Web site at **www.nea.org/teachexperience/achievgapfocus0405.html** for curriculum resources on specific ethnic groups.

NEA HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS is working on a new series of reports, called *Status of Education for Underserved Groups*. Two are already online at **www.nea.org/teachexperience/**, with more due later this year.

Finally, it's important to note that educators often need training themselves on diversity issues. NEA can help.

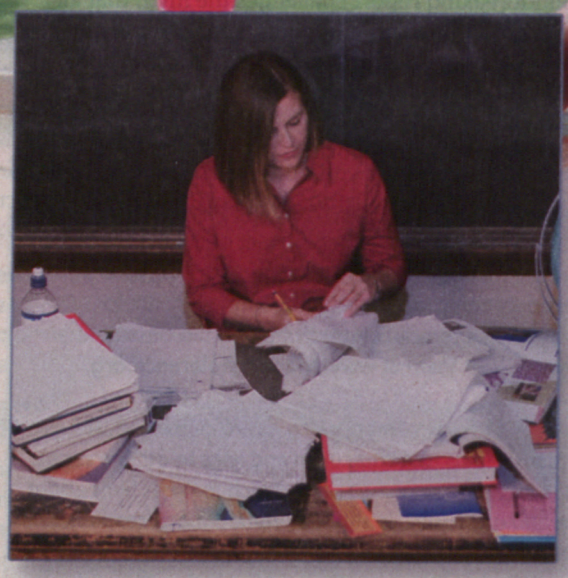
If you're interested in learning more about NEA's Diversity Training, or about safety, bias, and GLBT issues training, send an e-mail to **hcrinfo@nea.org**.

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

2004 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT

nea NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION nea.org
Great Public Schools for Every Child

How will you be wrapping up the school year?



www.neateachertoolkit.com

It's About Time...

NEA Teacher ToolKit™
Tools for teachers designed by NEA members

On TV

THE TRUE STORY OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

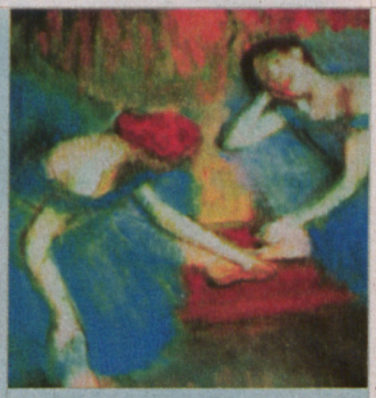
History Channel, May 1–3, 6 a.m. ET/PT.
This two-part documentary explores the life and surroundings of the legendary conqueror, including his father's palace in Macedonia, the caves where Aristotle tutored him, and the battlefields he conquered. Tape and use in class for two years.

THE SCIENCE OF LANCE ARMSTRONG

Discovery Channel, May 11, 5 a.m., ET/PT.
This program examines Armstrong's evolution from cancer survivor to cultural phenomenon and multiple Tour de France winner, with a focus on his extraordinary athleticism, dedication to perfection, and passion for technology. Incorporating the latest computer-generated imagery, the show features interviews with coaches, aerodynamicists, physiologists, and Armstrong himself. Tape and use in your classroom for one year. Teaching materials are at www.school.discovery.com.

BIOGRAPHY SPECIAL: THE IMPRESSIONISTS

A&E, May 15–18
7 a.m., ET/PT.
This four-part documentary tells the story of a revolution in art through the eyes of its most brilliant and important practitioners. Topics include the origins of impressionism and how the movement came to an end. Tape and use in class for two years. Materials are at www.aetv.com/class.



THE PLAGUE

History Channel, May 29–30, 6 a.m. ET/PT.
Based on the book, *The Great Mortality*, this two-part documentary chronicles the Black Death—a terrifying epidemic that swept across Asia and Europe in the 14th century. From the palace of the Pope to the humble huts of medieval peasants, few were spared. Can be taped and used in class for two years.

On TV listings are provided by KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D.C., www.kidsnet.org, and by Cable in the Classroom's Access Learning magazine at www.ciconline.org.

Stopping the Prison Revolving Door

"Imprisonment without education is a waste," says Al-Tony Gilmore, the NEA manager of a project to encourage more investment in educating young people behind bars. Since almost all of them will eventually move back into the community, everyone benefits when they learn skills to become productive citizens. And the younger the prisoner, the more likely education will take hold and change a life.

NEA is developing a directory of education programs that show promise for prisoners and former prisoners. The directory will list and describe these programs state by state, and will help NEA and state affiliates promote effective programs that help prisoners rebuild their lives and become successful citizens.

Stay tuned for more.

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PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: ART RESOURCE; GETTY IMAGES; DISCOVERY EDUCATION.

NEA Members: Welcome Home

Whether you want to buy your first home, your next home, a vacation home or retirement place, the **NEA Home Financing Program®**, offered exclusively by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, can help you gain the personal and financial benefits of homeownership. Exceptional service means NEA members can:

- **Apply for home financing easily**
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Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits

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With low minimum opening deposits ($1,000 for a CD and $500 for a Money Market Account), a variety of CD terms from 6 to 60 months, and the safety of FDIC Insurance up to $100,000 per depositor, you can find the saving options that are right for you and your budget.

To open an NEA-Sponsored CD or Money Market Account, call MBNA at **1-800-457-2258** and mention priority code JA0UT.

Or visit **www.neamb.com/cd** or **www.neamb.com/mm.**

NEA rates are subject to change weekly.

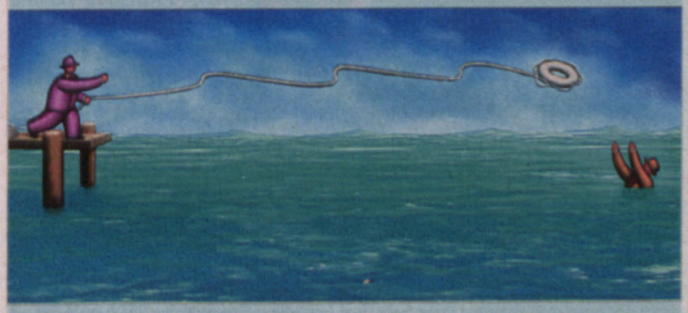
BRIDGE THE GAP—BEFORE YOU GET TO IT!

SCENARIO: YOU BOUGHT A CAR two months ago for $25,000 but a tree falls on it. The insurance company determines the car is now worth $20,000—a frightening 20 percent reduction in value.

That's where gap insurance can help; it covers the difference between your car's current assessed value and what you still owe the finance company.

If you lease a car, gap insurance is usually mandated by the contract or included in it. Check the lease to see if you have it, how much is offered, and how much it costs.

The NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance Program®, available through California Casualty, offers gap insurance in most states. To find out more, call **1-800-877-7345** or go online to **www.neamb.com/insurance/aplus.jsp.**



NEA MEMBERS HAVE OVER $4 BILLION ON DEPOSIT IN NEA-SPONSORED MONEY MARKET ACCOUNTS AND CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSIT.

ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY IMAGES

Karen McBryde

Teacher • 11th and 12th Grade • Gignilliat Park Academy • Seneca, SC

"Election Day in November is not that far away. As we wind down our school activities, we need to wind up our efforts to make sure we elect candidates friendly to Public Education. That's why I give to The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education and urge you to do the same."

Contribute to The NEA Fund for Children & Public Education.

Go to **www.neafund.org.**

DIVERSITY CALENDAR

MAY

MAY 1–31—ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Celebrate the history and accomplishments of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, a group with diverse languages and cultures. Find histories, biographies, and quizzes at www.infoplease.com/spot/asianhistory1.html.

MAY 1–31—BETTER HEARING AND SPEECH MONTH

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association sponsors this month to raise public awareness about how to identify, prevent, and treat speech, language, and hearing disorders. Go to www.asha.org.

MAY 5—FIRST AMERICAN IN SPACE

On this date in 1961, Alan B. Shepard Jr. became the first American to travel in space during a suborbital flight lasting 15 minutes, 22 seconds.

JUNE

JUNE 12—ANNE FRANK'S BIRTHDAY

This German Jewish girl, known to many worldwide through the publication of her diary in 1947, lived in hiding from the Nazis for two years. She died in a concentration camp at the age of 16. For more information, go to www.annefrank.com.

JUNE 14—FLAG DAY

On this date in 1777, the Continental Congress adopted the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of America. The day is marked by patriotic observances.

JUNE 19—JUNETEENTH

In 1865, more than two years after slavery was abolished in the United States, General Gordon Granger went to Galveston Island, proclaimed U.S. sovereignty over Texas, and ordered all slaves there free. The day was made a state holiday in Texas in 1979 and is now celebrated in other parts of the United States. For more, go to www.juneteenth.com.

STUDENTS TEACHING STUDENTS

Challenged by their principal to learn about tolerance and diversity, the students of Whitwell, TN chose the Holocaust. This inspiring documentary shows how students and educators can teach the world powerful lessons.

DEVELOPED BY EDUCATORS TO BE A TEACHING TOOL AND ACTIVELY INVOLVE STUDENTS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS, THIS INNOVATIVE DVD INCLUDES:

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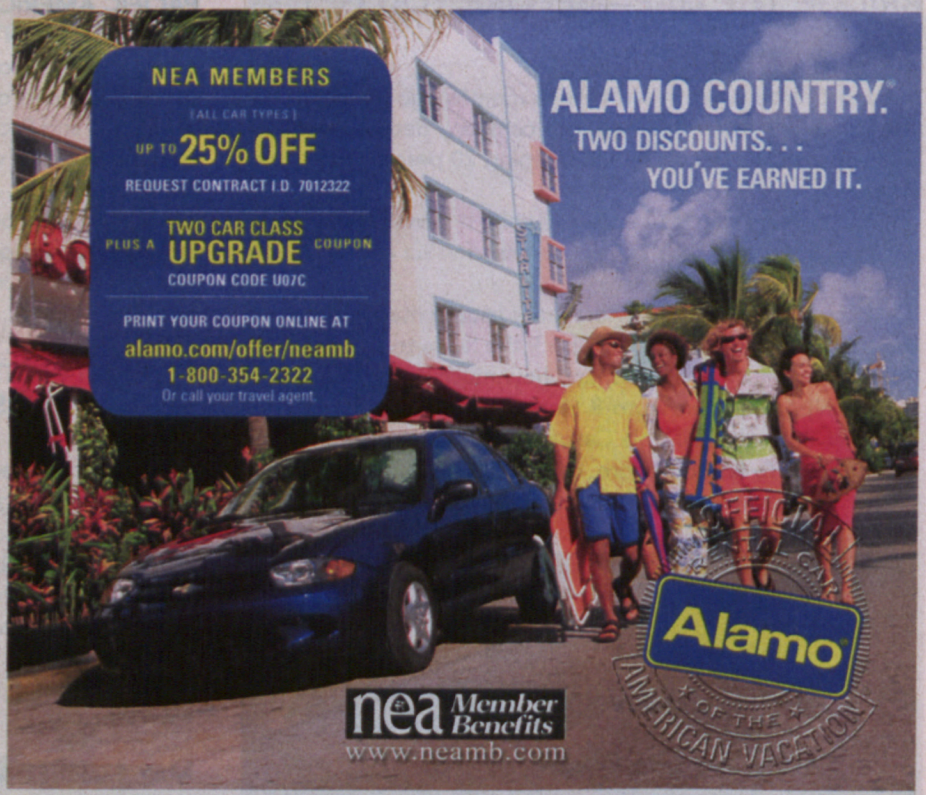
On the Web

LISTENING TO BLACK ELDERS

An excellent resource for American history or humanities teachers, the National Visionary Leadership Project offers nearly 200 video interviews with notable African-Americans—living and deceased—effectively preserving and distributing the wisdom of extraordinary elders who have helped shape our nation's history. Visitors can listen to the Honorable Shirley Chisholm, the first African-American woman to serve in Congress; musical innovator Ray Charles; gold medal athlete Alice Coachman; and writer and poet Maya Angelou, among others, as they discuss their life and times. Narratives are broken into short segments, allowing users on slower bandwidths to load and play clips and select which parts of the speaker's experiences to play. The site includes interview transcripts and other resources. Turn your Web browser to **www.visionaryproject.org**.

OPEN COURT

Fans of the Open Court reading method will appreciate **www.opencourtresources.com.** Created by teacher Mathew Needleman, the site features numerous activities and lesson plans, as well as recommendations from other teachers on how best to implement them. An active discussion board helps educators share their ideas. Many activities include links to (mostly) free resources that can supplement student learning. Activities are geared for preK–6 classes and are broken down according to age. Stop by and pick up a few tips, or submit your own.



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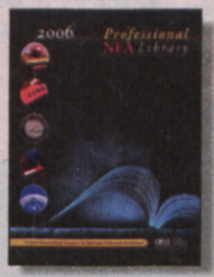

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Books Behind Bars

What do kids do in jail? Many discover reading.

BY JANE GUTTMAN

The door slams and I enter the world of prison, with its steel doors and barbed wire. The cold buildings conceal children awaiting trial for offenses ranging from malicious mischief to murder. A grim sight, filled with shackles and sorrow.

I never expected to work in a locked facility, but here I am, peddling books to juvenile inmates, ages 9 to 19.

Imagine that your student may only be in class a total of three hours before he or she goes off to court and probably years in prison. How can I deliver top-notch education fast, making every moment count? Time is running out for this group of learners.

The holding cell at Central Juvenile Hall is the starting point for these children. They walk silently, sometimes shackled, hands behind their backs—their dignity left with their belongings in Holding.

I met my first group on their hard bench, a place where orders are given and rules can be harsh. Trying for a dash of humanity, I shook hands and gave each student a "happy to meet you" comment.

One time, my classroom door jammed and we were locked inside, 18 incarcerated boys and I, waiting to be rescued by Probation staff. I realized in an instant the value of having adopted a genteel approach with my students. That was a long 10 minutes.

"FOR MANY of these children, jail is the ultimate teachable moment. A captive audience.... Many want to learn."

My next group was intake girls. High drama—babies left behind, custody issues in progress, current pregnancies, and battered young women. Literacy was the thread I wanted to use to hold them together, helping students focus on claiming skills to last a lifetime. It's hard to concentrate, though, with a newborn in the ICU because your milk contains drugs.

For many of these children, jail is the ultimate teachable moment. A captive audience, they give us courtesy, a semblance of attention. Many want to learn. This could be the first time in a career of childhood chaos that they have sat still long enough to digest a lesson. If you stop by a classroom, you will be struck by the silence and the work in progress—along with an occasional outburst of violent drama directed at another student or a even teacher, turning the classroom into a danger zone.

I work in the school library with kids who have never owned a book. Many are about to enter adulthood unable to read or write. Watching young men, tall and menacing, and stoic young women reading L.L. Stine, Captain Underpants, or an easy reader is an unsettling sight. They must progress beyond these literacy limitations to find their place in the world with respect and success. But they are floored by the choices we offer and the bounty of our wonderful books.

On any given day in our library, some students choose to join the readers of the world. Christopher did. Handing him a book in his cell during solitary confinement awakened an eagerness for reading. Stephen read the fifth Harry Potter book on lockup under a 24-hour suicide watch. Allie read every poetry book in our collection to ease the agony of possible lifelong incarceration.

I am working with a kid this week who is very talented in music, rap, and writing. He is young, 13, and on his way to the Youth Authority for three years. Something big happened here. I'll follow him with more writing work, and I won't be surprised if he has a book published on his exit.

A high school librarian once said there is a book for each child—no exceptions. Devising remedies for these students' insurmountable problems may be beyond my abilities, but finding that book is something I can do. And a book can save a life.

Jane Guttman is a librarian at the San Bernardino, California, juvenile court school. She received a $5,000 NEA Foundation Read Across America grant this year to buy books for her facility.

PHOTO: BOB RIHA JR.

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